

# Great Wisconsin Birding & Nature Trail

Mississippi/Chippewa Rivers Region





## Welcome

Welcome to Wisconsin, where a wonderful world of wildlife watching awaits you.

Environmental tourism has become an important part of our diverse mix of outdoor recreation. Extensive wetlands, millions of acres of wild places, a broad range of natural habitat, and a commitment to environmental stewardship have made Wisconsin an outstanding regional birding opportunity. More than any other state in the Great Lakes basin, Wisconsin is positioned to promote and enjoy this popular activity.

To that end, we have launched the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail. This project divides the state into five wildlife-viewing regions. Driving trails that link important wildlife sites within each region are being developed. The program will also produce a series of birding guides to these regions – one each year. This is the second in that series, a guide to the Mississippi/Chippewa Rivers Region.

Wisconsin – life's so good.

Jim Doyle, Governor

RI & LINDA MILLER



Riecks Lake Park near Alma in Buffalo County.

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# Wing your way through Wild Wisconsin

The *Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail* is your invitation to observe the fascinating and diverse world of wildlife that exists in every corner of the state.

By 2008, the Wisconsin DNR Endangered Resource Program will have developed a series of five highway-based viewing guides, each highlighting unique regional ecosystems of Wisconsin. Each will link a set of waypoints, refuges and wild places that offer the best birding and wildlife watching opportunities.

This is the second of those five guides; the Mississippi/Chippewa Rivers Birding and Nature Trail. It covers thirteen Wisconsin counties in the Mississippi or Chippewa River watershed. Opened in 2005, it includes 67 waypoints from the sandbar sloughs of the Mississippi River to the trout streams of Grant County.

In 2006, the Lake Michigan Birding and Nature Trail will debut followed in successive years by the Central Sands Prairie and Southern Savanna Trails. The first guide in the series, the Lake Superior Northwoods edition, was released in 2004 and is still available in limited numbers.

Waypoints on each trail will be marked with the program's distinctive Sandhill Crane logo. As you travel, watch for these signs – they are your invitation to the fascinating world of Wisconsin wildlife.



Least Bittern.



Waypoint marker.

## State Natural Areas



Wisconsin's State Natural Areas (SNAs) protect outstanding examples of native biological communities such as prairies, pine barrens, bogs, and boreal forests. They also preserve significant geological and archaeological features and are often the last refuges in Wisconsin for rare species of animals, plants, fungi, lichens, and a host of other organisms.

## Code of Ethics

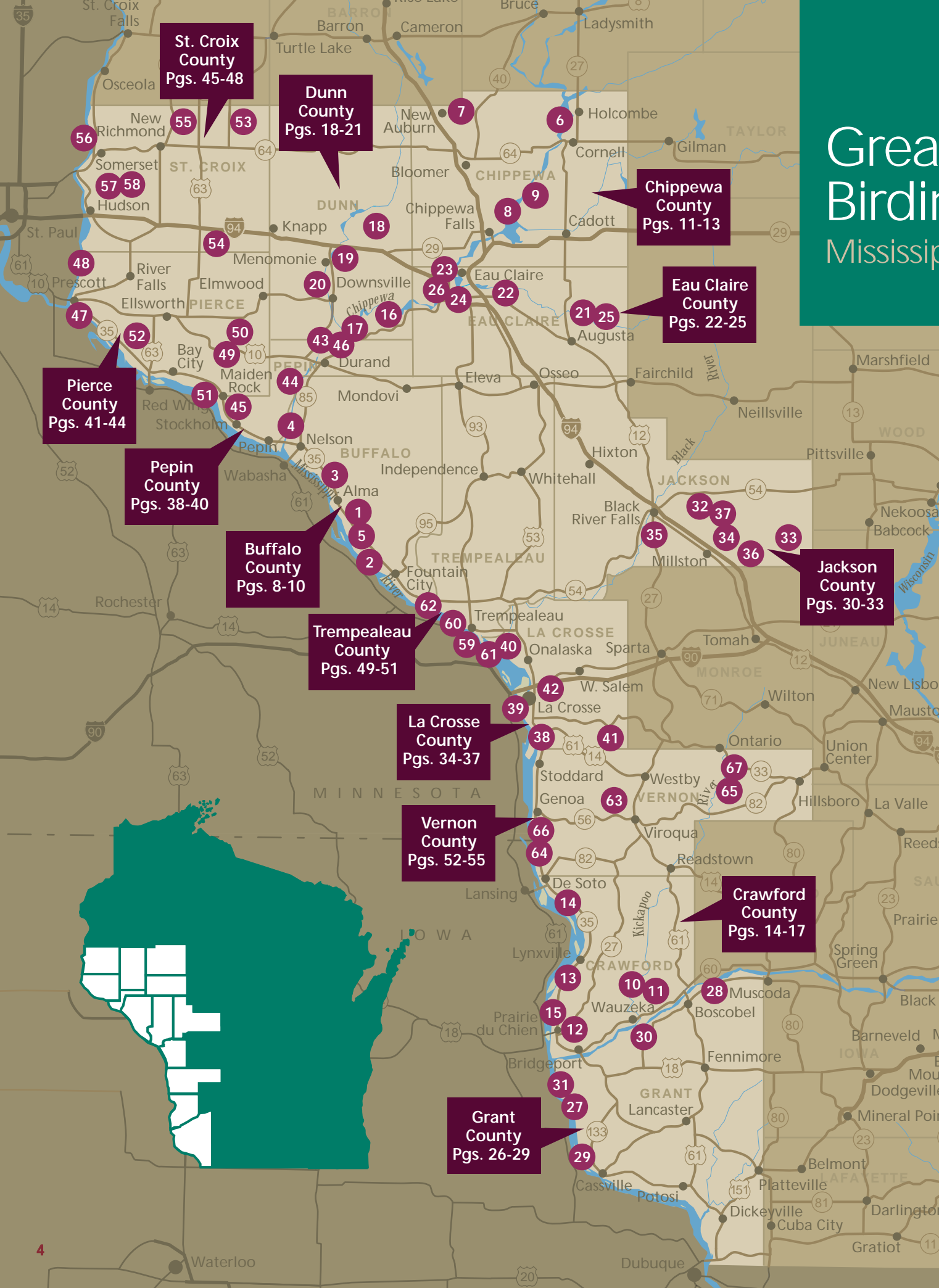
The Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail is your gateway to the natural world of Wisconsin. The Code of Ethics serves to guide you as you seek your favorite waypoint sites across the state.

- Treat birds and other animals with respect, never disturbing or collecting anything in their habitat.
- Trails, roads and paths found at the sites provide good access to the property. Avoid leaving them unless you are in a wilderness area.
- Wisconsin has strict trespass laws. Private property does not have to be posted or fenced in Wisconsin. Ask permission if you want to enter private land. Know where you are – pay attention to posted property boundary signs.
- Dogs must be leashed on all state lands during the bird-nesting season from April 15 through July 31.
- Lead by example. Leave the property litter-free and in good condition for the next traveler.
- Give nature a voice. Thank the property owner, manager or staff person for the opportunity to enjoy nature at their site.



Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly.





# Great Wisconsin Birding & Nature Trail

## Mississippi/Chippewa Rivers Region

### Using the Guide

Information for this guide was gathered locally from Wisconsin DNR and federal Forest Service personnel, from naturalists, birders, and a range of wildlife enthusiasts. Each site was nominated locally and evaluated as part of the regional project.

Site information includes a contact phone number, driving directions, a small locator map, a description of the property, common and rare birds and wildlife, and a Web site if available. Except as noted, admission to these properties is free. Hours are included, even though most properties are open 24/7.

As you would expect, most of these waypoints are remote, wild locations. While every effort has been made to provide accurate driving instructions, we recommend that you bring a county map or gazetteer to help in finding these sites. Other prudent equipment would include a compass, flashlight, water, a granola bar or two, insect repellent, and a good pair of walking/hiking shoes.

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RJ & LINDA MILLER



Tiffany State Wildlife Area, Buffalo County.



# Buffalo County



Buffalo County's tourism focus is a string of four charming small towns along the Mississippi River. You can catch them all simply by driving Hwy. 35.

Start with Fountain City in southern Buffalo County. The town offers pleasant vistas of the river from its characteristic terraced gardens. Nearby, 550-foot **Eagle Bluff** is the highest point on the Upper Mississippi. Just north of town, **Merrick State Park** is small (320 acres, 69 campsites) but a haven for river anglers (608/687-4936, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)).

Buffalo City/Cochrane is the gateway to some terrific birding in the Whitman Dam State Natural Area. The **Prairie Moon Museum & Sculpture Garden**, a fanciful, concrete-sculpted wonderland, is located just south of town (608/687-8250, [www.kohlerfoundation.org/rusch.html](http://www.kohlerfoundation.org/rusch.html)).

The riverfront town of Alma has only two streets, but they stretch for seven miles beneath the steep bluffs of the Mississippi. The city's **Buena Vista Park** sits atop those bluffs and offers spectacular views. Lock & Dam No. 4 is a popular spot to watch the river's barge traffic lock-through. Just north of town, across the Buffalo River, the observation deck at **Rieck's Lake Park** gets crowded in the fall with birders watching the annual migration of Tundra Swans.

Nelson, in northern Buffalo County, attracts visitors for that most Wisconsin of reasons – cheese. The **Nelson Cheese Factory** packs 'em in for cheddar, Colby, Monterey jack and fresh cheese curds (715/673-4725).

1

## Buena Vista Park

**Phone:** 608/685-6234

**Web site:**  
[www.buffalocounty.com](http://www.buffalocounty.com)

**Signature Species:** Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

**Gazetteer:** Page 48, B-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Paved parking lot.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Alma.



If you visit this park on a clear day in the spring or fall, you won't be disappointed. Located 500-feet above the village of Alma, it's a small park with a big view of the Mississippi River for several miles to the north and south. Equally impressive are the number of birds that you can see in this small area. The raptor migration along this area of the river is spectacular; in the spring you can see Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons and Broad-winged Hawks, and in the fall add American Kestrels and Cooper Hawks to your list. The woody area around the parking lot harbors lots of songbirds including Baltimore Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, Great-crested Flycatchers and Red-bellied Woodpeckers.

**Directions:** In Alma, turn east off Hwy. 35 onto Cty. E to the park.

2

## Merrick State Park

**Phone:** 608/687-4936

**Web site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature Species:** Green Herons, Great Egrets, and Wilson's Snipe.

**Gazetteer:** Page 48, C-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Paved parking lots throughout the park.

**Nearest food & lodging:** Camp at park, or in Fountain City 3 miles south on Hwy. 35.

**Fee:** Park entry & camping fees apply.



see Western Meadowlarks and Bobolinks as they sing from their grass perches or "sky lark" overhead.

**Directions:** From Fountain City, drive north 3 miles on Hwy. 35.

On the backwaters of the Mississippi River, Merrick State Park is a great place to bird watch any time of the year, but spring and fall migrations can be spectacular along this major migratory route. Though just 320 acres, the park offers canoe and kayak access to the extensive waters of the Whitman Dam State Wildlife area to the north and the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge to the south.

Paddle up on ducks and shorebirds. The wooded uplands hold Yellow-throated Vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Orchard Oriole and Cerulean Warblers. In the park's old fields and prairie restorations,



Green Heron.

3

## Rieck's Lake Park

**Phone:** 608/685-6234

**Web site:**  
[www.buffalocounty.com](http://www.buffalocounty.com)

**Signature Species:** Tundra Swans, Broad-winged Hawk, Scarlet Tanager, and Bald Eagle.

**Gazetteer:** Page 48, B-1

**Seasonality:** Open all year

**Parking:** Paved parking lot

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Alma.



No trip along this stretch of the river during spring and fall migrations is complete without stopping at Rieck's Lake Park to get great looks at Tundra Swans during peak migration times in spring and fall. Volunteers welcome visitors at viewing platforms at the water's edge. This is the best place along the Mississippi to see these magnificent birds, especially in the fall. In the spring, many species of ducks including Mallard, Black and Northern Pintails stop here along with species of teal, herons, bitterns and egrets. In the winter, look for Golden Eagles.

**Directions:** From Alma, travel two miles north on Hwy. 35, then turn east into the park.

## Tiffany Bottoms State Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 608/685-6222

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Whip-poor-will, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

**Gazetteer:** Page 58, D-3 & Page 59, D-8.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots throughout property.

**Nearest food & lodging:** Pepin to the north and Nelson to the south.



Tiffany Bottoms is the largest and most important intact floodplain forest in Wisconsin. It attracts nearly every species of bird found in Wisconsin. Its 12,740 acres occupy both sides of the Chippewa River between Nelson and Durand. All of the land is state owned and open to the public. Ten miles of railroad track into the heart of the property can be accessed from Hwy. 25 south of the Buffalo and Pepin County line. A walk on the tracks will take you through some of the most scenic areas of the property including the floodplain forest. Upland forests and savannas welcome nesting woodland warblers, flycatchers and woodpeckers of all kinds. Interior swamps produce night herons, bitterns and egrets.

**Directions:** This property is undeveloped but there are seven parking lots along Hwys. 25 & 35 for access; each is marked with DNR signs.

## Whitman Dam State Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 608/685-6222

**Web site:** [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us)

**Signature Species:** Canvasback Ducks, Tundra Swans, and Golden Eagles.

**Gazetteer:** Page 48, C-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Buffalo, 3 miles north on Hwy. 35.



Whitman Dam State Wildlife Area is six miles of marsh and slough from Merrick State Park north to the village of Buffalo. The southern part of this 2,173-acre property has areas where you can walk and sight lowland forest birds such as Black-billed Cuckoos, woodpeckers and Prothonotary Warblers. Bald and Golden Eagles have also been seen along this stretch of the river. A three-mile dike stretching north from Lock and Dam #6 creates Spring Lake that draws record numbers of ducks and Tundra Swans in the spring and fall migration seasons. You can walk the dike to see huge rafts of Canvasbacks, Ring-neck ducks and Scaup.

**Directions:** From Merrick State Park, travel north 1.5 miles on Hwy. 35 to Bechly Road, then west to Kamrowski Road, and north to the wildlife area

sign that is the southern part of the property. The northern part of the property can be reached from Cty. OO just south of Cochrane. You can turn south along the river to a boat ramp, parking lot and the dike along Spring Lake.

## Chippewa County



When you come birding in Chippewa County, bring all your other outdoor gear as well. Bikes, boats, snowmobiles, ATVs, hunting, fishing and camping gear, hiking boots, cross-country skis – you can use it all here.

**Lake Wissota** and **Brunet Island State Parks** total 150 campsites between them; the **Old Abe State Trail** offers 20 miles of railbed biking and hiking; and the **Chippewa Moraine Recreation Area** is a trail-head and interpretive center for the 1,000-mile National Ice Age Trail. In the northeastern corner of the county, **Lake Holcombe** is a perennial summer playground with 3,890-acres of water-fun. **Lake Wissota** in the southwest is 6,300 acres and is renown for its bass and walleye fishing.

On the western shore of Lake Wissota is Chippewa Falls, the county seat. The oldest business in town is the **Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company**. Visit the brewery's brand new visitor's center, tour the brewery and sample the beer (888/534-6437, [www.leinie.com](http://www.leinie.com)). Other tour opportunities in town include the **Cook-Rutledge Mansion**. Built in 1873, it's one of the finest examples of High Victorian-Italianate architecture in the Midwest (715/723-7181, [www.chippewachamber.org](http://www.chippewachamber.org)).

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## Brunet Island State Park

**Phone:** 715/239-6888

**Web site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature Species:** Blackburnian Warbler, Northern Waterthrush & Purple Finch.

**Gazetteer:** Page 73, C-7.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Cornell, just southeast of the park.

**Fee:** Park entry & camping fees apply.



This 1,225-acre state park straddles both sides of the Chippewa River along a section that includes Brunet Island. The Fisher River comes in from the north; its bays and lagoons are good places to see beaver, mink, herons and deer. The park's eight miles of hiking trails take you into different birding habitats. Hike the wetlands along the rivers to find Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Common Yellowthroats. Nashville Warblers, White-throated sparrows and Northern Parula Warblers like the wooded areas. The bays surrounding the islands on the river hold Great Blue Herons, Hooded Mergansers, Mallards and Blue-winged Teal.

The park also offers an interpretive museum, swimming, canoeing, fishing, and 69 campsites. The Jean Brunet Nature Trail is paved for handicapped access.

**Directions:** From Cornell, take Park Road north one mile to the park.



## 7 Chippewa Moraine Ice Age National Scientific Unit & Interpretive Center

**Phone:** 715/967-2800

**Web site:** [www.iceagetrail.org](http://www.iceagetrail.org)

**Signature Species:** Great Blue Heron & Red-headed Woodpecker.

**Gazetteer:** Page 73, C-5.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** New Auburn.



Wisconsin's last glacier retreated 16,000 years ago leaving a spectacular landscape in its wake. The Ice Age Trail traces the glacier's terminal moraine – a 1,000-mile trail that meanders through Wisconsin marking the glacier's southern terminus. In Chippewa County, the trail runs 23 miles from the Interpretive Center to Burnet Island State Park. In this part of the state, the trail traverses an area that is heavily forested with numerous kettle lakes. Hiking the trail will produce many northern forest birds: Ruffed Grouse, Great Crested Flycatchers, Cooper's and Broad-winged Hawks, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Buntings and Great Horned Owls all nest here. Near the kettle lake look for ducks, mergansers, geese and herons.

**Directions:** From New Auburn, travel east on Cty. M nine miles to the Interpretive Center on the left.

## 8 Lake Wissota State Park

**Phone:** 715/382-4574

**Web site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature Species:** Pine and Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Raven.

**Gazetteer:** Page 61, A-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Chippewa Falls, seven miles southwest.

**Fee:** Park entry and camping fees apply



This 1,062-acre park combines pine and hardwood forest, lake, prairie and marshland that support 200 avian species. During migration, the 6,300-acre lake is alive with waterfowl: Blue and Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintails, Mallards, Scaup, Mergansers, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon and American Black Duck. Canada, Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese also use the area along with Trumpeter Swans. Grasses and wildflowers, called forbes, dominate the prairies. Here, look and listen for Willow Flycatchers, Sedge Wrens, Eastern Bluebirds, Northern Harriers, the Common Nighthawk, and our smallest falcon, the American Kestrel. The hardwood forest can be enjoyed via 17 miles of trail.

**Directions:** From Chippewa Falls, take Hwy. 178 north to Cty. S east. As you cross the bridge over the Chippewa River, turn east on Cty. O two miles to the park.

## 9 Old Abe State Trail, Wildflower Trail, & Lake Wissota State Park Trails

**Phone:** 715/726-7880

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Eastern & Western Meadowlark and Willow Flycatcher

**Gazetteer:** Page 73, C-5 & Page 61, A-6

**Seasonality:** Open all year

**Parking:** Parking lots provided

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Cornell, Jim Falls & Chippewa Falls

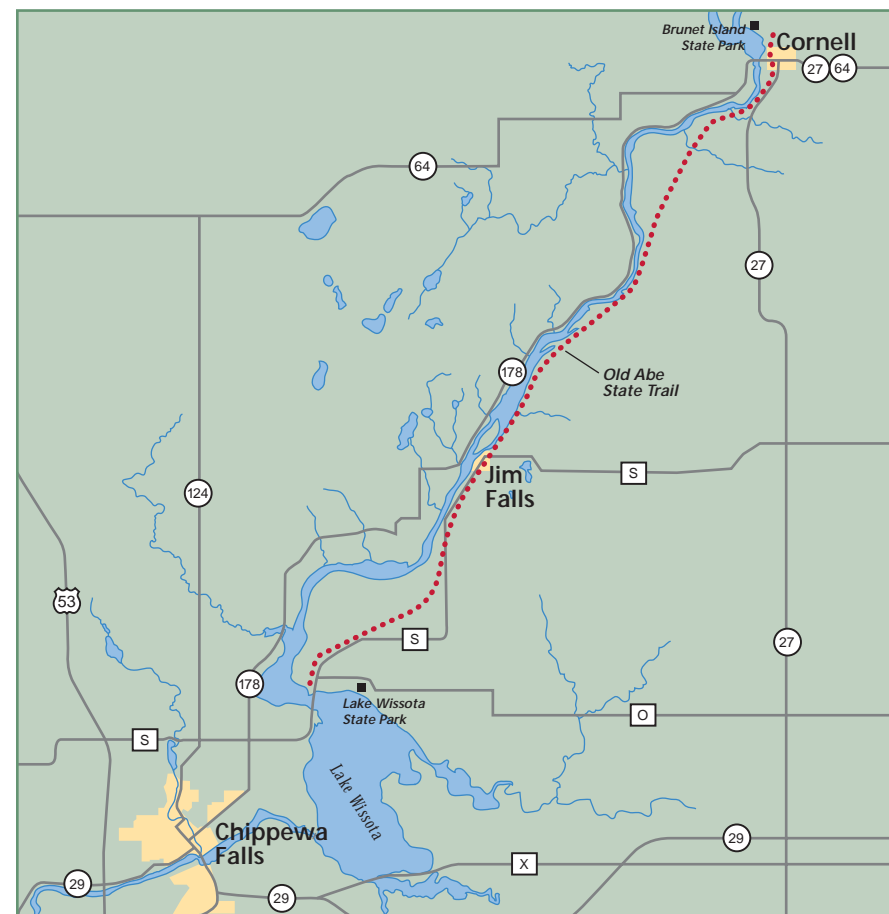
**Fee:** Trail pass



Widow Skimmer.

Paralleling the Chippewa River, the Old Abe State Trail is a twenty-mile, multi-use, paved trail connecting Brunet Island State Park at Cornell with Lake Wissota State Park at Chippewa Falls. Eventually, the trail will extend to Eau Claire where it will meet the Chippewa River State Trail and, from there, the Red Cedar State Trail forging a 60-mile roll through the Chippewa Valley. As you hike or ride the Old Abe, you'll see meadowlarks, sparrows and numerous warblers. At the trail's midpoint at Jim Falls you can access the Wildflower Trail, so named for its spectacular spring wildflower display. On this half-mile hike along the river bottom you might see Pine and Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-throated Sparrows and Alder Flycatchers. Overhead, watch for Red-shouldered Hawks.

**Directions:** Access the Old Abe Trail from trailheads in Lake Wissota or Brunet Island State Parks.





# Crawford County



Knit together by meandering rivers and trout-filled streams, Crawford County in southwestern Wisconsin is awash in history.

Prairie du Chien, the county seat, straddles the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers. At the Hwy. 18 bridge, stop at the **Wisconsin Welcome Center** (WCC) for free trip planning, statewide travel brochures, maps and a friendly smile (608/326-2241, [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)).

Prairie du Chien's varied history is captured in a number of intriguing historic sites. Perhaps the most notable is the gracious **Villa Louis**, the Victorian country estate of the Dousman family, Wisconsin's first millionaires (866/944-7483, [www.wisconsinhistory.org/villalouis](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/villalouis)). The city is also the site of one of three historic pre-civil War forts built and operated by the US Army in Wisconsin. Tour the **Fort Crawford Museum** for more local history (608/326-6960, [www.fortcrawfordmuseum.com](http://www.fortcrawfordmuseum.com)). If you're more outdoorsman than historian, there's a **Cabela's** retail store in town with everything for the hunter, angler and camper (608/326-5600, [www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com)).

About twelve miles upstream, just south of Lynxville, you can stop at **Lock & Dam No. 9** to watch river barges and pleasure craft lock-through.

In Wauzeka, tour the **Kickapoo Indian Caverns**, the largest subterranean caverns in the state (608/875-7723, [www.kickapooindiancaverns.com](http://www.kickapooindiancaverns.com)).

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## Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area – Wauzeka Unit

**Phone:** 608/785-9000

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

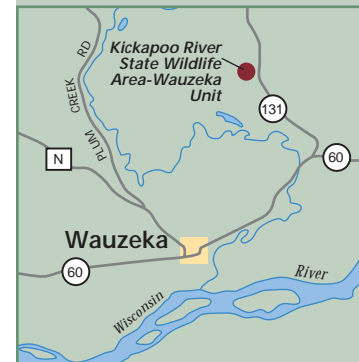
**Signature Species:** Sandhill Cranes, Turkeys, and Savannah Sparrow.

**Gazetter:** Page 32, D-3.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot along Hwy. 131, one mile north of Hwy. 60.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Wauzeka (south), Boscobel (east) or Prairie du Chien.



The 2000 acres of the Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area are contained in two units. The Bell Center Unit is located south of Gays Mills and the Wauzeka Unit is on the southern border of Crawford County. The Wauzeka Unit is an interesting mix of grass-covered hills, river bottoms and wooded hillsides. A good trail system leads you through some excellent river bottomlands where you can view waterfowl, woodland bottom warblers like the Prothonotary, and Great Blue Herons. The variety of habitats along this 3-mile stretch of trail can also produce Gray Catbirds, Indigo Bunting and American Redstart warblers.

**Notes:** This part of the state is referred to as the driftless, or unglaciated part of Wisconsin. It is known for its limestone bluffs, steep hillsides covered with hardwood forests, and its dry hill-top grasslands known as "goat" prairies.

**Directions:** From Wauzeka turn north on Hwy. 131 one mile to the parking lot.

10

## Hogback Prairie State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/785-9000

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

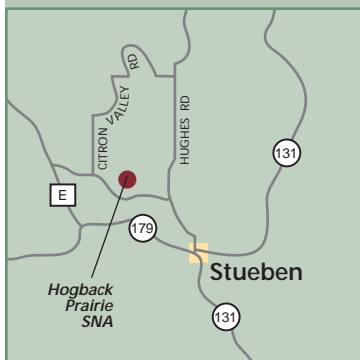
**Signature Species:** Cranes, Sedge Wrens, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

**Gazetter:** Page 32, B-4.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking along road across from kiosk.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Boscobel, southeast of Steuben.



Hogback Prairie is a narrow, steep-sided, limestone ridge rising 300 feet above the Kickapoo River and the Citron Valley. It is the dominant feature of this 971-acre site. To the north, west and east the ridge is flanked by dry prairie. To the south, the landscape blends into oak woods and brush prairie. The area supports an unusual mix of plants and animals including rare butterfly species, purple prairie-clover, bird's-foot violets and side oats grama grass. Grassland birds include Sedge Wrens and Bell's Vireo.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Hwy. 179 and Bridge Street in Steuben, go north on Bridge Street 0.5 mile, then west and north on Hughes Road 2 miles, then west on Citron Valley Road 0.8 mile. Park along the road across from the information kiosk.

PHILIP OLSON



Canoeing the Kickapoo River.

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## La Riviere Park

**Phone:** 608/326-7207

**Web Site:** prairieduchien.org

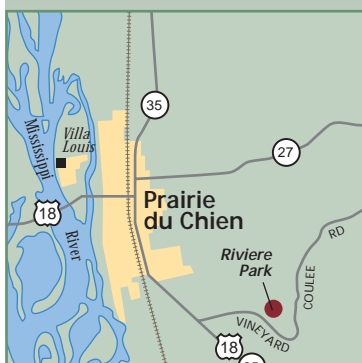
**Signature Species:** Eastern Bluebird and Lark Sparrow.

**Gazetter:** Page 32, D-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year from 6am–11pm.

**Parking:** Parking lot.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Prairie du Chien.



La Riviere Park is owned by the City of Prairie du Chien and has six miles of hiking trails. The site is located on the Bridgeport Terrace above the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers. Trails lead to woodlands and grasslands where you can see Scarlet Tanagers, Tufted Titmice, and White-eyed Vireos. The park has restrooms, a drinking fountain, camping and picnic areas, and a nature center with limited hours.

**Directions:** From Hwy. 35/18 on the south side of Prairie du Chien, go one mile east on Vineyard Coulee Road.

MIKE McDOWELL



Lark Sparrow.

13

## Lock and Dam 9 & Pool 9

**Phone:** 608/874-4311

**Web site:** mvp.usace.army.mil

**Signature Species:** Bald Eagles all year long.

**Gazetter:** Page 32 B-2.

**Seasonality:** Lock & dam open April–November. Pool 9 is open all year.

**Parking:** Ample parking areas.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Prairie du Chien and Lynxville.



Pool No. 9 on the Mississippi River stretches from the lock and dam south of Lynxville north to Genoa. Travel Hwy. 35, the Great River Road, and enjoy this huge body of water. During migrations, hundreds of thousands of ducks can be seen from the many pull-off areas located along the highway. Good numbers of Tundra Swans use the area as do American White Pelicans. Turkey Vultures, hawks and Bald Eagles soar on the thermal air currents along the bluffs. The Cold Springs Boat Landing north of Lynxville is a good place to watch water birds of all kinds.

**Notes:** Lock & Dam No. 9 near Lynxville and Lock & Dam No. 8 at Genoa offer public observation platforms and restrooms open from dawn to dusk from April to November. They're great places to watch the barge traffic along the river.

14

## Rush Creek State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/785-9000

**Web site:** dnr.wi.gov

**Signature Species:** Turkey Vulture and Kentucky Warbler.

**Gazetter:** Page 32, B-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot on Rush Creek Road.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Ferryville, 3 miles south on Hwy 35.



Located north of Ferryville, the Rush Creek State Natural Area encompasses exceptional dry prairies, oak forest, and 400-foot limestone-capped bluffs. The prairies on the very steep, southwest-facing slopes hold blazing-star, compass-plant and bird's-foot violets. The north-facing hillsides are forested with red and white oak, black walnut, hickory, basswood, and sugar maple. Rush creek runs through the middle of this 2027-acre property. It harbors numerous species of songbirds during the spring and fall migrations. The steep climb to the top of the bluffs is rewarded with a spectacular view of the Mississippi River.

**Directions:** From Ferryville, go north on Hwy. 35 for 3.1 miles, then northeast on Rush Creek Road for 0.5 mile to a parking area west of the road. Cross the road and walk east on the old lane to the bluff top.

15

## St. Feriole Island

**Phone:** 608/326-7207

**Web site:** prairieduchien.org

**Signature Species:** Bonaparte's Gulls and shorebirds.

**Gazetter:** Page 32, D-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year 6am–11pm.

**Parking:** Parking lot.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Prairie du Chien.



This 240-acre island on the east channel of the Mississippi River has a mix of habitats including beaches, floodplain forest and grassland. In the spring, floodwaters create mud flats ideal for migrating shorebirds. One may see American Avocets along the beach. A trail leads away from the parking lot to a floodplain hardwood forest where warblers and other migrant songbirds can be seen. Peregrine Falcons hunt ducks along this stretch of the river corridor.

**Directions:** In downtown Prairie du Chien at Hwy. 35 & Hwy. 18, drive west on Blackhawk Avenue and cross the bridge to get onto the island.

MIKE McDOWELL



Peregrine Falcon.



# Dunn County



Dunn County is a nice blend of tourism, agriculture and industry. Menomonie, the county seat, is an important hub made more so by **UW-Stout** whose 7,500 students are half the city's population. The vital downtown is anchored by the historic **Mabel Tainter Memorial Theatre**, now lovingly restored to its 1889 splendor with an art gallery, reading room and 313-seat theater (800/236-7675, [www.mabeltainter.com](http://www.mabeltainter.com)). The

**Russell J. Rassbach Heritage Museum** displays a series of themed exhibits that illuminate Dunn County history (715/232-8685, [www.discover-net.net/~dchs](http://www.discover-net.net/~dchs)). Nearby, the city's **Wakanda Water Park**, with its waterslides and fountains, is a great place to beat summer's heat.

The **Red Cedar River** transects Dunn County and is a popular tubing river. You can also bike the **Red Cedar State Trail**, a 14-mile former railbed trail from Menomonie south to its junction with the **Chippewa River State Trail** (715/232-1242, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)). As you ride, you'll pass Downsview, home of **Empire in Pine**, a lumber-era museum with a village jail, post office and blacksmith shop (715/664-8690, [www.discover-net.net/~dchs](http://www.discover-net.net/~dchs)).

17

## Dunnville State Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 715/232-1517

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature species:** Lark Sparrow and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

**Gazetteer:** Page 60, C-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Downsview, 3.5 miles north.



The 5,000 acres surrounding the confluence of the Red Cedar and Chippewa Rivers is the Dunnville State Wildlife Area, divided into the Upper and Lower Dunnville Bottoms. This property is a mix of prairie, floodplain forest, fields and ridges covered by woods. Clay-colored and Lark Sparrows live here. You may even hear or see Bob White Quail. Red-shouldered Hawks nest here along with Eastern Kingbirds, Barred Owls and Blue-winged Warblers. The restored prairies on the property hold Western meadowlarks, Willow Flycatchers and Sedge Wrens. Along the edges of the prairie where they meet the shrubby trees, look for Turkeys, Orchard Orioles and White-eyed Vireos. Long and Wallace Lakes in the interior of the property hold ducks, herons and rails.

**Directions:** From Downsview, take Hwy. 25 south to Cty. Y, then turn east to a parking lot.

16

## Caryville Savanna State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/232-1517

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Red-shouldered Hawk and Eastern Bluebird.

**Gazetteer:** Page 60, C-3.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot at boat landing.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Eau Claire, 11 miles east.



Picture yourself canoeing or kayaking to a beautiful island in the Chippewa River where time seems to stand still and birds call from oak groves and grassy prairies. This is what you'll find when you visit the 420-acre Caryville Savanna State Natural Area located on Brush Island. Look for Orchard Orioles, Gray Catbirds, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in the oak barrens, and keep an eye out for Clay-colored and Lark Sparrows in the prairies. When exploring the floodplain forest, look for Barred Owls, Whip-poor-wills, Red-headed Woodpeckers and Eastern Phoebe.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Hwys. 85 and Cty. H just north of Caryville, drive north on Cty. H 0.5 mile to a boat landing on the Chippewa River. Canoe downstream about 3 miles to Brush Island south of the main channel and north of Meridean Slough. Canoe access is also available from a boat landing on 240th Avenue.

BOB QUEEN, WISCONSIN DNR



Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area.

18

## Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area

**Phone:** 715/232-1517

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Great Crested Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo and Eastern Wood-Pewee.

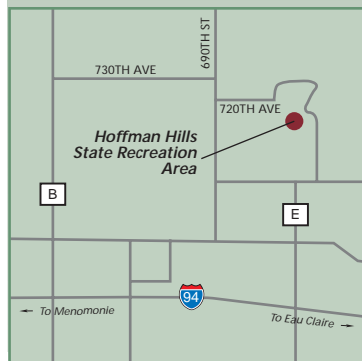
**Gazetteer:** Page 60, A-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Menomonie, 7 miles southwest.

**Fee:** State Trail Pass – No dogs allowed.



This 707-acre property is a mosaic of wooded hills, prairies and wetlands with a network of hiking and cross-country ski trails. It includes the highest spot in Dunn County with a 60-foot observation tower and spectacular views of the countryside. Forest birds found here are the Scarlet Tanager, Common Raven, Northern Rough-winged Swallow and Tufted Titmouse.

In the wetlands, look for Green Herons, Green-wing Teal and Virginia Rails. In the prairies, look for Sedge Wrens and Common Yellowthroats. Deer, coyotes, mink, raccoons and muskrats share this day-use recreation area.

**Directions:** Exit I-94 north at Cty. B and go 2.5 miles to 730th Avenue. Go 2 miles east to 690th Street and turn south to 270th Avenue to the entrance.

MIKE MCDOWELL



Common Yellowthroat.

19

## Lake Menomin & Wolske's Bay at Lakeside Park & Wakanda Park

**Phone:** 715/962-4460

**Web site:**

[www.menomonie.com](http://www.menomonie.com)

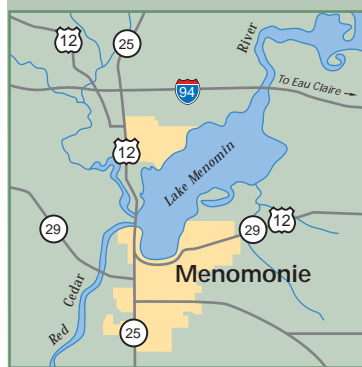
**Signature Species:** White Pelican, Goldeneye Duck and Franklin's Gull.

**Gazetteer:** Page 60, A-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Menomonie.



Menomonie's Lake Menomin harbors several beautiful parks along its shores. Wolske Bay off of Lakeside Park on the west side of the lake hosts Hooded Mergansers and Goldeneyes during spring migrations. Wakanda Park on the northwest shore holds a variety of warblers along with House Wrens, Gray Catbirds, Blue Jays and Indigo Buntings. Wakanda is also the home of the Lions Club Game Park featuring native Wisconsin animals and a nature trail. At the north end of the lake a slough area runs further north to Cedar Falls. During migrations, it holds many kinds of songbirds, ducks, herons and hawks.

**Directions:** Access Wakanda Park from Hwy. 25 to Pine or Maple Avenue. Lakeside Park is located off Hwy. 25 on Wolske Bay Road.

20

## Red Cedar State Trail

**Phone:** 715/232-1242

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Eastern Blue Birds, Bald Eagle and Bobolinks.

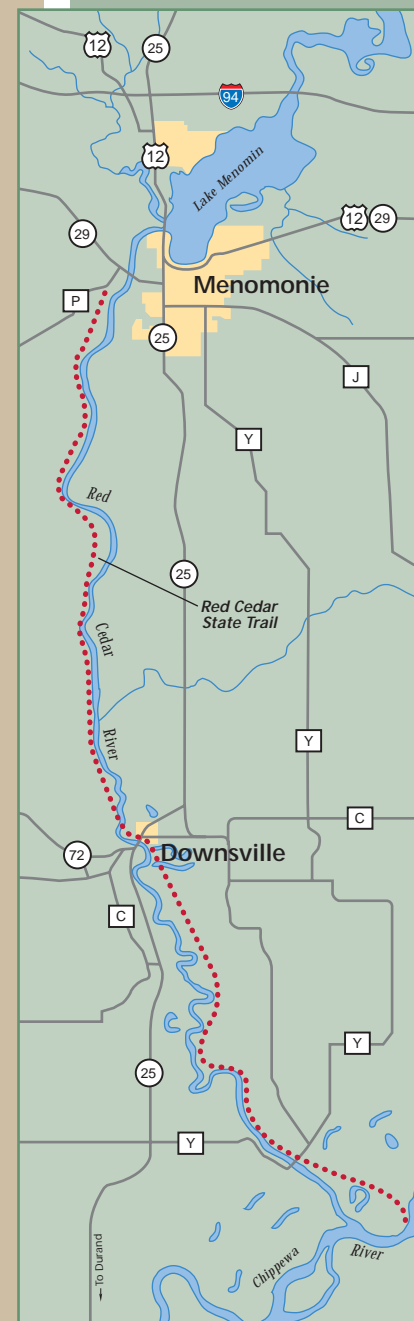
**Gazetteer:** Page 60, B-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Menomonie.

**Fee:** Trail fees apply.



The Red Cedar State Trailhead is located in Menomonie at an old railroad depot in Riverside Park. The trail meanders south along the Red Cedar River for 14.5 miles through serpentine valleys, rolling hills, bluffs, woodlands and prairies all the way to the junction with the Chippewa River. You can hike or bike this trail. The woodlands will hold Blue Jays, the prairies have Eastern Kingbirds and Field Sparrows, and the backwater areas are great places to find all kinds of ducks, Green Herons and Sora Rails. Watch for mink, red fox and muskrats along the water's edge.

About halfway, the historic town of Downsville is the home of the Empire in Pine Lumberjack Museum. Just three miles south of Downsville is the Caddie Woodlawn Historical Park located on Hwy. 25. Near the confluence of the two rivers, the trail will traverse the Dunnville Bottoms State Wildlife Area, the heart of the Chippewa River Valley.

**Directions:** At Menomonie, exit I-94 at Hwy. 12 south (Broadway) and go 2 miles to Hwy. 29, turn west to Riverside Park.

DON ABRAMS



Biking the Red Cedar State Trail.



# Eau Claire County



According to local legend, French voyageur Jonathan Carver first shouted "L'Eau Claire" ("clear water") in 1767 and so named the county, city and river. The county's ten lakes and 161 miles of trout streams maintain that "clear water" legacy.

The city of Eau Claire is also the county seat.

**Carson Park** is one of the city's outdoor jewels. Its 134 acres house the **Chippewa Valley Museum**,

an award-winning regional museum with outstanding Native American and local history dioramas (715/834-7871, [www.cvmuseum.com](http://www.cvmuseum.com)). Next door, tour the **Paul Bunyan Logging Camp**, an authentic reproduction of an 1890's original (715/835-6200, [www.paulbunyancamp.org](http://www.paulbunyancamp.org)). The **Fanny Hill Victorian Inn and Dinner Theatre** is a delightful restaurant and B&B with professional dinner theater performances (800/292-8026, [www.fannyhill.com](http://www.fannyhill.com)).

Eighteen miles to the east, Augusta is a much smaller, but no less interesting destination. The community includes an Amish settlement of more than 150 families. Their handcrafted goods are sold at the **Wood Shed** (715/286-5404). Just north of town is the remarkable **Dells Mill**, a flour mill built in 1864 entirely of wood, including gears and pulleys (715/286-2714).

21

## Augusta State Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 715/839-3771

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Sandhill Cranes, Sora Rails and Great Blue Herons.

**Gazetteer:** Page 61, C-8.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Augusta, 4 miles south.



This 2,100-acre marsh and woodland lies just south of Lake Eau Claire. Hiking trails access the interior of the property. Gravel roads provide driving access to a pair of small ponds where you can see herons and egrets feeding along the water's edge while Sandhill Cranes forage in nearby marshes. As you walk the dike roads you'll see marsh birds, wrens and sparrows. The mixed hardwood areas are good places to find Great Crested Flycatchers, Eastern Pewees and American Kestrels. The ponds' proximity to Lake Eau Claire make them attractive to migrating or nesting waterfowl; look for Canada geese and numerous duck species on the ponds.

**Directions:** From Augusta, drive north 4 miles on Cty. G; then follow it east to the parking area. There is also a parking lot on the east side of the property off Kelly Road.

22

## Beaver Creek Reserve

**Phone:** 715/877-2212

**Web site:**

[www.beavercreekreserve.org](http://www.beavercreekreserve.org)

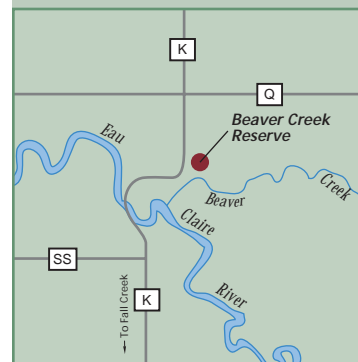
**Signature Species:** Pine and Nashville Warblers & Red-bellied Woodpeckers.

**Gazetteer:** Page 61, B-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year, Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm, Sat 9am-4pm, Sun noon-4pm.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Fall Creek, 3.5 miles south; or in Eau Claire 12 miles west.



Beaver Creek Reserve is a 360-acre property that includes the Wise Nature Center, Hobbs Observatory, and a unique Butterfly House. The property is a mixture of upland hardwood forest, prairie, and lowland floodplain forest. The waterfalls and sandy beaches of the Eau Claire River offer a glimpse of a Louisiana Waterthrush or a gray fox as they come to drink the cool water. Tufted Titmice, Great Crested Flycatchers, American Kestrels and Cooper's Hawks are found on the property along with Song Sparrows and House Wrens.

Overlooking Beaver Creek, the Wise Nature Center offers interpretive displays and live animal exhibits. Miles of hiking trails, a wildlife photography blind, butterfly gardens, feeding stations and boardwalks make any visit here enjoyable. The Hobbs Observatory has a pair of computer-operated telescopes. The Butterfly House is a great place to photograph butterflies as they

sip nectar on plants grown for them in the nearby greenhouse.

**Directions:** From Fall Creek, drive north 3.5 miles on Cty. K; then follow signs to the property.

TOURISM PHOTO FILE



Dells Mill and Museum, near Augusta.

23

## Carson Park, Half Moon Lake & Riverview Park

**Phone:** 715/839-4914

**Web site:** [www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us](http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us)

**Signature Species:** Coot, Gadwall, Great Horned Owl, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

**Gazetteer:** Page 60, B-4.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Eau Claire.



Carson Park is Eau Claire's largest; a 130-acre peninsula surrounded by Half Moon Lake. Its trails, woods, marshes and brushy areas attract many species of birds. Hiking trails scale the bluffs. From overlooks you can see Black Ducks, Wood Ducks and Mallards on the lake below. The park's many popular attractions include the Chippewa Valley Museum, Paul Bunyan Logging camp, and an historic baseball field.

Riverview Park lies along the Chippewa River on the city's north side. An arched bridge crosses the river leading to an island where you can access the river's backwaters for Yellow warblers, Willow Flycatchers and song sparrows.

**Directions:** Carson Park can be reached from Carson Park Drive, Lake St. or Menomonie St. Riverview Park has numerous entrances along Riverview Drive.

24

## Chippewa River State Trail - Phoenix Park, Eau Claire Trail Head

**Phone:** 715/232-1242 or 715/839-5032

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Pine Warblers and Lark Sparrows.

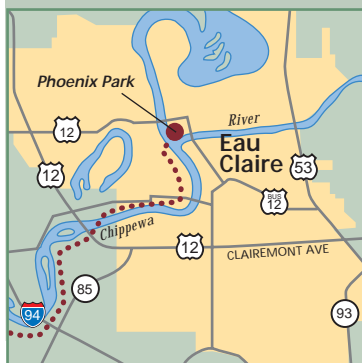
**Gazetteer:** Page 60, B-4.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Eau Claire.

**Fees:** Trail pass fees apply outside of the City of Eau Claire.



In Eau Claire, the trailhead for the Chippewa River State Trail is located in Phoenix Park at the confluence of the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers. The trail runs south thirty miles to Durand. The first eleven miles (to Caryville) are paved.

Trail habitats change from urban woodland and grassland to agriculture to hardwood and floodplain forest. High above the trail, Cormorants, Turkey Vultures and Bald Eagles ride the thermals. Remnant prairies, grasslands and shrubby thickets hold Brown Thrashers, Bobwhite, Field and Clay-colored Sparrows and Yellow-throated Vireos. In some of the larger, older fields, you might hear the call of Bobolink and Upland Sandpipers.

**Directions:** The best access is from First Avenue and Fulton Street.

25

## Coon Fork Barrens State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/839-3771

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

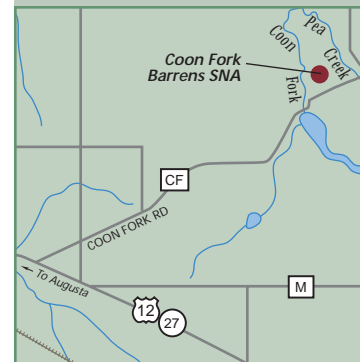
**Signature species:** Karner blue butterfly, Wild Turkey, and Blue-winged Warbler.

**Gazetteer:** Page 61, C-8.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking area provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Augusta, 6 miles west.



Coon Fork Barrens lies between two tributaries of the Eau Claire River, Coon Fork Creek and Pea Creek. The property is 580 acres of gently rolling barrens, brushy sand prairie and ferns atop sandy soils. Stunted Jack pine, Hills, black, white and bur oaks accent the barrens with blueberry and American hazelnut bushes. Birds include the Northern Raven, White-throated Sparrow, Clay-colored and Grasshopper Sparrow, Willow Flycatcher, Bobolink, Goldfinch, Veery and Yellow-rumped Warbler. In the winter the area supports winter finches. Prairie plant species include wild lupine, which supports a population of rare Karner blue butterflies.

**Directions:** From Augusta, drive east 1.6 miles on Hwy. 12, then northeast on Cty. CF (Coon Fork Road) 4.2 miles to a parking lot at its intersection with Horse Creek and Goat Ranch Roads. A hiking trail runs through the site.

26

## Putnam Park State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/836-2637

**Web site:** [www.uwec.edu](http://www.uwec.edu)

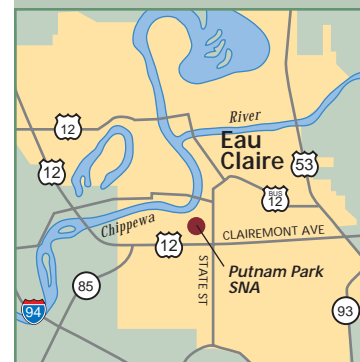
**Signature species:** Summer Tanager, Winter Wren, Purple Finch & Cedar Waxwing.

**Gazetteer:** Page: 61, B-5.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Eau Claire.



Expect to add some new birds to your checklist when you visit this birding hot spot. Putnam Park is the best place to bird watch in Eau Claire. Owned by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, habitats range from prairie to old growth pine to rocky cliffs, marshes and floodplain forest. There are two sections to the park, one on each side of the campus. All of this urban green space acts like a magnet for birds in any season. You can see Bald Eagles, Tufted Titmice, Pine Warblers, Ring-billed Gulls, Purple Finches and Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers.

**Directions:** To access the western portion, walk west from UW-EC parking lot #4 along the interpretive trail into the area. To access the eastern portion, use Putnam Drive, which runs through the area and starts across from parking lot #14.



# Grant County



Grant County fills the southwestern corner of Wisconsin where the Mississippi River sculpts the state's border in a great sweeping "S" turn. The attractions here are many. Start your trip at the **Wisconsin Welcome Center** on Hwy. 151/61 just north of the Hwy. 11 interchange where you'll find plenty of free travel advice, literature, maps and directions (608/748-4484, [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)). Along the Mississippi stop in Dickeyville at a

remarkable and fanciful bit of concrete folk art, the **Dickeyville Grotto** (608/568-3119, [www.dickeyville.com](http://www.dickeyville.com)). Follow Hwy. 35 a bit further north to Potosi to see the **St. John Lead Mine**, where you can don a hard hat and tour this once ore-rich cave (608/763-2121). Drive on to Cassville where you can camp along the bluffs of **Nelson Dewey State Park** (608/725-5374, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)). You can also visit **Stonefield**, a replica of an 1890's rural Wisconsin village (866/944-7483, [www.wisconsin-history.org/stonefield](http://www.wisconsin-history.org/stonefield)). In the far northwestern corner of the county, the views from the river bluffs above **Wyalusing State Park** are special (888/947-2757, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)).

In the north, Fennimore offers the **Fennimore Doll and Toy Museum** (888/867-7935) and the **Fennimore Railroad Museum** with its narrow gauge steam engine and miniature train ride (800/822-1131.)

In the southeastern corner of the county, Platteville is home to UW-Platteville as well as the **Mining Museum & Rollo Jamison Museum** (608/348-3301, [www.platteville.com](http://www.platteville.com)). Here you can descend into an 1845 lead mine, ride a 1931 mine

27

## Bagley Bottoms Boat Landing

**Phone:** 608/935-3368

**Web Site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Wood ducks, egrets and herons.

**Gazetter:** Page 24, A-1

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Large gravel parking lot.

**Nearest food & lodging:** Private campground and food in Bagley.



This boat landing is typical of many that are found all along the Mississippi River. Often these small, secluded areas offer the birder a chance to get close to the river and explore the floodplain forests from a slightly elevated road. A short hiking trail leads to the backwaters of the Mississippi where there are numerous birds to be found on most days. Species such as Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Pileated Woodpeckers and American Egrets are seen in the area.

**Directions:** From Bagley, travel .05 mile northwest on Cty. X to a point nearly across the road from a private campground. Bohrineier Road takes you across the rail road tracks and down to the boat landing parking area.

28

## Blue River Sand Barrens State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/375-4123 (DNR)

**Web Site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

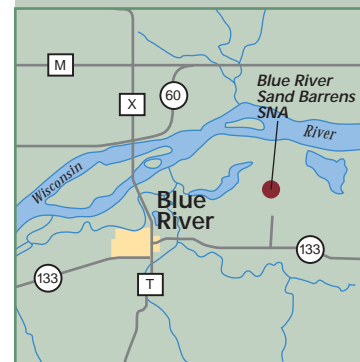
**Signature Species:** Eastern prickly pear cactus, Hill's oak, Clay-colored, Vesper and Lark Sparrows, Bobolinks and Upland Sandpipers.

**Gazetter:** Page 33, C-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year during daylight hours.

**Parking:** Park along road at the southeast corner of the property.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Muscoda 7 miles east, or Boscobel 7 miles west.



The unstable, sandy soil of this 130-acre terrace along the Wisconsin River is one of the state's largest and best examples of a dry prairie-like landscape and "moving" sand dune communities. Moving sands are shaped by the wind, creating "blowouts" or large unvegetated depressions. A scattered forest of black and Hill's oaks help to stabilize the sand in other areas providing habitat for false heather and bearberry that have adapted to the dry and harsh conditions. Reptiles like the six-lined racerunner live here along with many species of grassland birds and river turtles that nest in the dunes.

**Directions:** From Blue River, go east on Hwy. 133 for 1.9 miles, then north on Wightman Road 0.25 mile to the southeast corner of the site. Parking is along the road. This property lies within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway.

29

## Nelson Dewey State Park and Dewey Heights Prairie State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/725-5374

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Eagles, Carolina Wren, Pileated Woodpecker & Cerulean Warbler.

**Gazetter:** Page 24, C-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking throughout park.

**Nearest Food & lodging:** Park offers campsites, or in Cassville 1.2 miles east of the park.

**Fee:** State park vehicle admission sticker required.



Towering bluffs along the Mississippi River, hidden valleys, and Dewey Creek give this 756-acre state park its character. Located within the park is Dewey Heights Prairie State Natural Area. A hike along the bluff-top prairie provides panoramic views of the Mississippi River and river valley. From the pasque-flowers of early spring to the asters of fall, a diversity of plants bloom here throughout the season. In the spring and fall, dozens of migratory species join resident Lark, Field, and Grasshopper Sparrows. Bald Eagles winter along this stretch of the river and can be seen from November through March.

**Directions:** From Cassville, go northwest on Cty. VV 1.2 miles to the park entrance. Maps are available at the park office. Follow the park road to the bluff summit to reach Dewey Heights Prairie State Natural Area.

## Lower Wisconsin River State Wildlife Area

**Web Site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

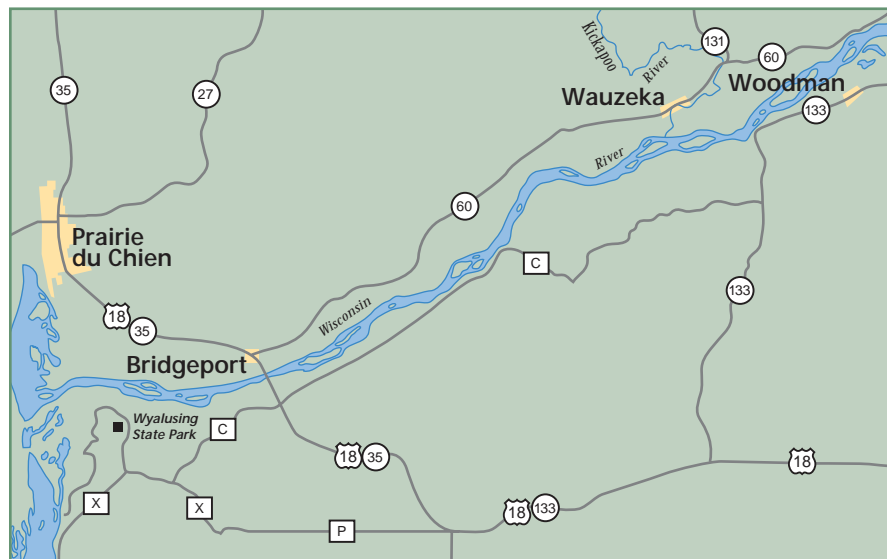
**Gazetter:** Pages 32-33, D1-7.

**Nearest food and lodging:** In Prairie du Chien, Boscobel, Blue River and Muscoda.



Great Horned Owl.

In the southwestern corner of the state, the Wisconsin River forms the boundary between Grant and Iowa Counties on the south and Crawford and Richland Counties to the north. The Lower Wisconsin River State Wildlife Area flanks that part of the river in several distinct units. Marsh habitat, river bottom, agricultural fields, and bluffs host an astounding number of bird species from owls to Ruffed Grouse. There are numerous sites clearly identified for public access along Highway 18 in the Bridgeport/Wisconsin River Bottoms area, and east along Cty. C to Bergum Bottoms and Woodman. Continue exploring along Hwy. 133 east to Boscobel and Muscoda.



Wyalusing State Park.

## Wyalusing State Park and Wyalusing Walnut Forest State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/996-2261

**Web Site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature Species:** Red-shouldered Hawk, Kentucky and Prothonotary Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Turkey Vultures and Whip-poor-wills.

**Gazetter:** Page 24, A-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Paved lots throughout property.

**Nearest food & Lodging:** Park has electric/non-electric sites for camping, or in Prairie du Chien 6 miles north, or in Bagley 1 mile north.

**Fee:** State park vehicle admission sticker required.

Located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers, Wyalusing is one of the best places along the river for birding. The 2,628-acre park offers a diversity of habitat that attracts many bird species. Within the park, Wyalusing Walnut Forest State Natural Area lies on the north face of a 500 foot-high bluff overlooking the two rivers. The forest contains two nearly pure stands of black walnut trees, and spectacular spring wildflower displays.

**Directions:** Traveling south from Prairie du Chien, cross the Wisconsin River on Hwy. 18/35. Turn west on Cty. C for 3.5 miles, then west on Cty. X for 1.1 miles, then north on the park road for 1.7 miles to the nature center parking lot. Pick up a park map at the park office.



Prothonotary Warbler.



Camping along the lower Wisconsin River.



# Jackson County



With nearly a third of its land in state and county forests, Jackson County is a recreational bonanza in the center of the state. There's something for everyone, and everyone's toys.

The **Black River State Forest** (715/284-4103, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)) alone covers 67,000 acres offering 34 miles of horseback riding trails, 33 miles of mountain bike trails, 33 miles of ATV trails, 51 miles of snowmobile trails, 27 miles of hiking trails, 24

miles of X-C ski trails, backpacking and 98 family campsites.

County forestlands cover another 118,000 acres with many camping and day-use options.

The county promotes 100 miles of ATV/motorcycle trails. There are two excellent canoe trails mapped and marked on the Black River. The **Wazee Lake Recreation Area** encompasses 3,000 acres on what was a former iron mine. Wazee Lake, the former mine site, covers 150 acres and is 355-feet deep, Wisconsin's deepest. The water clarity makes it one of the finest scuba diving lakes in the Midwest.

Black River Falls is the county seat. You can catch a little excitement at **Majestic Pines Hotel, Bingo & Casino** (800/657-4621, [www.mpcwin.com](http://www.mpcwin.com)). To wet your whistle, stop at the **Pioneer Brewing Company** in the historic 1856 Oderholz Brewery building for a tour and a taste (715/284-7553, [www.cuttingedge.net/~pioneer](http://www.cuttingedge.net/~pioneer)).

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## Bauer Brockway Barrens State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/284-1400

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

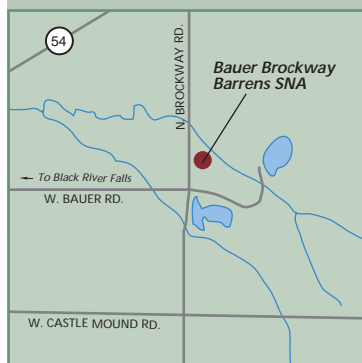
**Signature Species:** Karner blue butterfly, Eastern Kingbird and Willow Flycatcher.

**Gazetteer:** Page 50, B-3.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking area provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Black River Falls, 2 miles southwest of site.



Bauer-Brockway Barrens State Natural Area is a 240-acre sandy barrens with scattered open-grown jack pine and Hill's Oak. The rare Karner blue butterfly thrives on the prairie's wild lupine. Other prairie plants include June grass, little bluestem grass, sand primrose, bird's-foot violet, western sunflower and cream wild indigo. Shrubs such as American hazelnut and New Jersey Tea provide singing platforms for many grassland birds including Field and Vesper sparrow, Nashville and Prairie Warblers, Indigo Bunting, and Eastern Towhee.

**Directions:** From Black River Falls, go east 0.4 miles on Hwy. 54, then east 3.8 miles on West Bauer Road, then north 0.2 miles on Brockway Road to a parking area east of the road.

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## Bear Bluff Peatlands

**Phone:** 715/284-1400 (DNR)

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

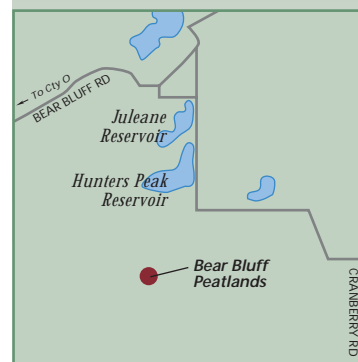
**Signature species:** Timber Wolf, Golden-winged Warblers & Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

**Gazetteer:** Page 51, C-5

**Seasonality:** Gravel roads are impassable in winter and at frost break-up in spring – use paved roads only at these times.

**Note:** This property is in private ownership; Wisconsin trespass laws apply.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Millston, Tomah or Black River Falls



The Bear Bluff Peatlands is a large and remote area of bogs, marshes, tamarack and spruce forests, upland oak forests and fens. The landscape is flat with scattered bluffs and mounds. Upland areas are a good place to find Black-billed Cuckoos and Scarlet Tanagers. In the marshes, look for Green-winged Teal and Hooded Mergansers. The fens and peatlands host White-throated Sparrows, and Hermit, Nashville and Connecticut Warblers. Common Raven and Golden-crowned Kinglets are found in the areas dominated with spruce trees. Golden Eagles winter here along with Sharp-tailed Grouse and Northern Saw-whet Owls.

**Directions:** Located east of Millston between the tiny towns of City Point and Mather. Access the area from Millston via Cty. O and W. Bear Bluff Road (east-west), or from Cranberry Road (north-south), a paved road along the Juneau/Jackson County line.

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## Black River State Forest & Dike 17

**Phone:** 715/284-4130 or 284-1417

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature species:** Bald Eagle, Timber Wolf & Karner blue butterfly.

**Gazetteer:** Page 50, B-4.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots throughout property.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Black River Falls.



The Black River State Forest covers 67,000 acres in the heart of Jackson County. Unusual and unique geological features make the property unlike any other Wisconsin state forest. Unglaciated buttes, sandstone hills and bluffs like Castle Mound are fun and interesting to explore. Dike 17 is considered by many to be the jewel of this state forest. The 3700- acre area is nearly half wildlife refuge. It harbors some unusual endangered and threatened species including massasauga rattlesnakes, timber wolves and Karner blue butterflies. Osprey and Bald Eagles can be seen overhead.

**Directions:** From the intersection of I-94 and Cty. O in Millston, travel east on Cty. O into the southern part of the forest, then turn north to Dike 17 on N. Settlement Road. From Black River Falls, Hwys. 54, 27 or 12 can take you north or south into the property. Follow Hwy. 12 to Castle Mound Park.

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## Castle Mound Pine Forest State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/284-1400

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Broad-winged Hawk, Blue-headed Vireo and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

**Gazetteer:** Page 50, B-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Black River Falls.



Castle Mound Park is just south of the city of Black River Falls. It is named for the 400-year-old Cambrian sandstone butte that rises 180 feet above the surrounding sand plain. Cliffs up to 30 feet high chisel the park's central back-bone ridge. Boulders litter the forest floor beneath red and white pine, oak, birch, maple and aspen. Plants like large-leaved aster, wintergreen and partridge berry make up the ground layer vegetation. The Red-breasted Nuthatch, pine warbler, solitary vireo and Black-throated Green Warblers are found here. Also seen are Broad-winged Hawks, Ovenbirds and Scarlet Tanagers.

**Directions:** From Black River Falls, go east on Hwy. 12 for 0.7 miles to the entrance of Castle Mound Park, then west on the access road to the picnic area parking lot. A trail leads to the observation tower.

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## Jay Creek Pine Forest State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/284-1400

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

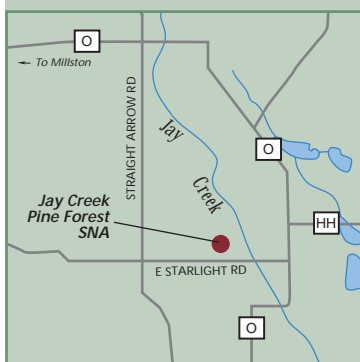
**Signature Species:** Veery, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Pileated Woodpecker.

**Gazetteer:** Page 50, 4-C.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking area provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Black River Falls or Tomah.



This property is a mix of wet to dry pinewoods developed on the flat and poorly drained soils of extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The uplands are a northern dry-mesic forest of red and white pines, red maples and white oaks. Of special interest is a site that runs along Jay Creek, a fast moving, cold-water stream populated by brook trout. This unusual community is a white pine and red maple swamp that grows on the gently sloping wet sand along the creek. Black spruce is a common tree near the stream along with paper and yellow birch and some tamarack. Interesting birds found here include Ovenbird, Pine, Canada and Black-throated Green Warbler and Blue-headed Vireo.

**Directions:** From Millston, go east 6.5 miles on Cty. O, then south 2.8 miles on Straight Arrow Road, then east 0.8 miles on E. Starlight Road to a parking area north of the road. Walk north along an old access lane.

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## Wazee Lake Recreation Area

**Phone:** 715-284-3171

**Web site:**

[www.wisconline.com/counties/Jackson](http://www.wisconline.com/counties/Jackson)

**Signature species:** Osprey, Grasshopper Sparrow, Wood Thrush.

**Gazetteer:** Page 50, B-3.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Black River Falls.

**Fees:** Camping fees apply



The newest and largest County Park in Jackson County is Wazee Lake Recreation Area. The 1,300 property was the former Jackson County Iron Mine and Wazee Lake was the quarry.

The lake is the deepest inland lake in the state and is a popular destination for scuba diving. Miles of hiking trails and gravel bike trails will take you through prairies and forests. Wazee Lake is a clear, deep, non-motor lake that is great for fishing. It attracts many kinds of waterfowl, eagles and Osprey.

**Directions:** From the intersection of I-94 and Hwy. 54 in Black River Falls, go east on 54 for .4 mile, then east on West Bauer Road 3.8 miles, then south on South Brockway Road to the entrance.



Grasshopper Sparrow.

DAVID HERRICK



Black River State Forest.



# La Crosse County

Much of La Crosse County is a maze of steep ridgelines and valleys known as "coulee country." It's a part of Wisconsin that was not flattened by the last glacier some 14,000 years ago. It's wooded, secluded, and less traveled – practically perfect for birding.

In La Crosse, stop at the **Wisconsin Welcome Center** on I-90 (eastbound) for free, statewide travel literature, maps, directions and advice (608/783-6403, [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)). **Grandad Bluff**, a

beautiful park atop the bluffs flanking La Crosse, offers **Grandad Bluff**, a beautiful park atop those bluffs, offers a stunning view of three states: Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. Classic steam paddlewheelers still ply the river here: enjoy a cruise aboard the **La Crosse Queen** (608/784-8523, [www.greatriver.com/laxqueen](http://www.greatriver.com/laxqueen)), or the **Julia Belle Swain** (800/815-1005, [www.juliabelle.com](http://www.juliabelle.com)). **City Brewery**, once the Heileman's Old Style Brewery, offers tours (608/785-4283, [www.citybrewery.com](http://www.citybrewery.com)). Historians will like **Hixon House**, the Victorian home of a former lumber baron (608/782-1980). The kids will like the **Children's Museum of La Crosse** (608/784-2652, [www.childmuseumlax.org](http://www.childmuseumlax.org)).

Just north of I-90, Onalaska is a central trailhead for a pair of railbed biking trails: the **Great River State Trail** and the **La Crosse River State Trail** (608/781-9570, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)).

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## Hixon Forest Nature Center, La Crosse River Marsh, Riverside Park & Myrick Park

**Phone:** 608/784-0303

**Web site:** [www.bigfoot.com/~hfnr](http://www.bigfoot.com/~hfnr)

**Signature Species:** Yellow-throated Vireo, Great Egret and Lincoln Sparrow

**Gazetteer:** Page 40, B-1.

**Seasonality:** Properties open dawn to dusk all year; Nature Center open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Sat-Sun 1-4 pm.

**Parking:** Parking lots at each property.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In La Crosse.



The best birding in La Crosse is found in this group of city parks that collectively offer more than 800 acres. Hiking trails access bluffs, wetlands, woodlands and native prairies. Hike to the top of Grandad Bluff, the city's signature overlook with exceptional views of the Mississippi River. You can even observe wildlife from floating observation platforms in the marsh.

The Hixon Forest Nature Center is an area hub for maps, educational displays, and naturalist programs. The five-mile-long River to Bluff Trail runs from the bluffs of Hixon Forest to Riverside Park on the Mississippi River. The trail cuts through the La Crosse River Marsh. It's a great way to see this secluded area. Birds vary with the habitat and include terns, Great Egrets and Virginia Rails in the wetlands, Pileated Woodpeckers and thrushes in the woodlands.

**Directions:** The Hixon Forest Nature Center is located at 2702 Quarry Road.

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## Goose Island County Park

**Phone:** 608-788-7018

**Web site:** [www.co.la-crosse.wi.us](http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us)

**Signature Species:** Prothonotary Warblers.

**Gazetteer:** Page 40, B-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking Provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In La Crosse/Goose Island Campground.



This county park is an island in the Mississippi River and is in the heart of the La Crosse District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. It is a wonderful spot to spend a day or more exploring the area on land or by water. On the canoe trail, signs will direct you along a marked trail through the sloughs and backwaters surrounding this wooded island. Exploring the island by water is a great way to see muskrat, mink and deer. Goose Island is large and has 400 campsites that are available by reservation. There are many family-based activities here, but there is enough land to accommodate birders and wildlife viewers who appreciate quiet landscapes. This property is a great place to stop and pick up some waterfowl as well as songbirds and raptors for your checklist.

**Directions:** Take Hwy. 35, 3 miles south of La Crosse to the junction with Cty. K and follow the main road west into the park.

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## McGilvray Bridges & Van Loon State Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 608/785-9000

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) or [www.7bridgesrd.org](http://www.7bridgesrd.org)

**Signature Species:** Indigo Bunting and American Redstart Warblers.

**Gazetteer:** Page 49, D-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Gravel parking lots.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Trempealeau, Onalaska & La Crosse.



The 4,000-acre Van Loon State Wildlife Area contains six historic McGilvray arch truss bridges over the Black River built circa 1892. Hiking the paths from one bridge to the next is a wonderful way to see the bottomlands as well as all of the region's woodpecker species, Bald Eagle and Red-shouldered Hawks. The vast bottomlands offer year-round birding opportunities. In spring, high water in the Black River makes much of the land along Hwy. 53 impassable. However, the highway still offers good visual access to the landscape.

**Directions:** Take Hwy. 53 north from Onalaska to Amsterdam Prairie Road to a parking lot for the McGilvray bridges. The trail from the first bridge to the sixth bridge and back is 3.7 miles in length. Van Loon can be accessed by foot or boat from numerous parking lots and a boat landing along Hwy. 53.



## Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center

**Phone:** 608/452-3424

**Web site:** [www.norskedalen.org](http://www.norskedalen.org)

**Signature Species:** Black-billed Cuckoo, Tufted Titmouse & Eastern Bluebird.

**Gazetteer:** Page 40, C-2.

**Seasonality:** Nature trails open all year. Nature center open summer Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun noon-6pm; winter Mon-Fri 10am-4pm, Sun noon-4pm.

**Parking:** Parking lots.

**Fee:** Admission fees apply.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Coon Valley, 3 miles south on Cty. Pl.



"The Norwegian Valley," or Norskedalen, is a 400-acre cultural and historic site that includes a modern visitor center and museum, several restored log pioneer farmsteads, and

five miles of hiking/cross-country ski trails. The trails meander through a variety of habitats that are attractive to many species of birds and animals. The flatter lands on these

"Coulee" parcels (noted for their steep ridges and valleys) were once farmed. Today, these grassy fields attract meadowlarks, Sedge Wrens and Bobolinks. The property's woodlands and ravines are home to Great Crested Flycatchers, White-eyed Vireo and Baltimore Orioles.

**Directions:** Located 3 miles north of Coon Valley on Cty. Pl.



Bobolink.



Bakkam Farmstead at Norskedalen in winter.



Fall color along the Mississippi near Onalaska.

## Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge - La Crosse District

**Phone:** 608-783-8405

**Web site:**

[www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrosse](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrosse)

**Signature Species:** Canvasback Ducks & Tundra Swans.

**Gazetteer:** Page 40, B-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In La Crosse, Alma & Trempealeau.



The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge is one of the largest wildlife refuges in the US with over 200,000 acres of land and water along 260 miles of river. The scenic refuge protects habitat along this important migratory bird corridor, provides places for people to recreate and leads the traveler through scenic river channels and to secluded islands. Observation decks and a visitor center welcome the public to this beautiful public resource.

The La Crosse District area of the refuge is comprised of 46,608 acres of land that covers 35 miles of the Upper Mississippi River Valley and includes Navigation Pools number 7 and 8. The bird list for the refuge contains 265 species and covers everything from raptors to songbirds. You can access the refuge from many sites along the Great

River Road, which is Hwy. 53. There are numerous pull-off areas along the road with interpretive signs and observation decks. Or, you can begin your adventure by visiting the visitor center to get maps and additional information on the resource.

**Directions:** The visitor center is located east of the Mississippi River in the City of La Crosse at 555 Lester Avenue. From I-90, exit south on Hwy. 16 and travel to Theater Road. Turn right onto Theater road and continue to Rudy Street. Turn on to Rudy St. and proceed to Lester Avenue and the USFWS building.



# Pepin County



Pepin County is defined by Lake Pepin, a 28-mile-long, three-mile-wide bulge in the Mississippi River. This natural lake is one of the most popular sailing and boating sections on the Upper Mississippi. It is formed by the delta of the Chippewa River, which backs-up the Mississippi much like a natural dam.

Pepin is also famous as the hometown of Little House in the Big Woods author Laura Ingalls

Wilder, who was born on a farm near here in 1867. The town celebrates its Wilder legacy year-round at the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum** (800/442-3011, [www.pepinwisconsin.com](http://www.pepinwisconsin.com)), and at a wayside replica of the Wilder "little house." In September, "Laura Days" brings special readings, look-alike contests, food and fun. The town's logging, steamboating and rail-road history is hold in the **Pepin Depot Museum** (715/442-6501, [www.pepinwisconsin.com](http://www.pepinwisconsin.com)).

Away from the Mississippi, the county follows the Chippewa River inland to Durand, the county seat, where you'll find a pair of boat launches on the river, a golf course and a city swimming pool. Durand is also the western trailhead for the **Chippewa River State Trail**, a 29.5-mile biking/hiking trail that follows the river all the way to Eau Claire (888/523-3866, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)).

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## Chippewa River State Trail

**Phone:** 715/232-1242

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Eastern Kingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Willow Flycatcher.

**Gazetteer:** Page 60, C-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Durand, Menomonie and Eau Claire.

**Fee:** A trail pass is required for all uses except hiking.



The Chippewa River State Trail is a 26.5-mile railbed trail that meanders with the river from Durand to Eau Claire. Gray Catbirds, Indigo Buntings and Red-shouldered Hawks are easy to spot along this trail. Several bridges along the way make for an interesting hike and are great to photograph.

Along the way, the Red Cedar and Chippewa Rivers meet about seven miles northeast of Durand. From that junction, the Red Cedar State Trail runs north 14 miles to Menomonie. The Red Cedar River valley glides through steep rock walls and lush forests. Belted-Kingfishers dive from lofty perches to feed on small fish along the river and the songs of Scarlet Tanagers, Eastern Wood-Pewee and Whip-poor-wills can be heard along the way.

**Directions:** Trailheads can be found in Durand and Eau Claire.

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## Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/232-1517

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Paddlefish, Acadian Flycatcher & brittle prickly pear cactus.

**Gazetteer:** Page 58.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking Areas throughout area.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Durand and Menomonie.

MIKE MCDOWELL



Acadian Flycatcher.

The Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area features the largest concentration (2,000 acres) of remaining prairies and savannas in the state. You'll find this habitat on floodplain islands in the river channel and in the surrounding hillsides. The largest contiguous floodplain forest in the Midwest is located in Tiffany Bottoms State Wildlife Area, south of Durand. The birds found here reflect this rarity. They include the state-threatened Red-shouldered Hawk, Cerulean and Hooded Warblers and Yellow-crowned Night Herons. Seventy percent of all the fish species in the state find habitat in the Chippewa and Red Cedar Rivers including the rare paddlefish.

**Directions:** This State Natural Area totals 15,000 acres scattered among many sites along the Chippewa and Red Cedar Rivers in Pepin, Buffalo and Dunn Counties. Sites are marked with DNR State Natural Area signs. Two parking lots are found 3 miles south of Pepin on the east side of Hwy 35.



## Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/232-1517

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, & Turkey Vulture.

**Gazetteer:** Page 58, C-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking area at site.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Stockholm.



Maiden Rock Bluff overlooks Lake Pepin and is one of Wisconsin's premiere limestone cliff faces high above the Mississippi River. Extending for nearly a mile, the 400-foot-high bluff is home to nesting Peregrine Falcons; one of only six bluffs on the Mississippi River where the falcons successfully nest. Hairbell, slender lip fern and many other cliff dwelling plants grow here along with 250-year-old red cedars. The open cliff and adjacent dry prairie provide habitat for rare prairie plants. The rocky bluff provides hunting perches and habitat for other raptors including Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles and Turkey Vultures.



Bald Eagle.

**Directions:** From Stockholm, go north 0.7 miles on Cty. J, then northwest one mile on Cty. E, then west on Long Lane 0.7 miles to the site.

## Nine Mile Island State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/232-1517

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Prothonotary and Black-and white Warblers.

**Gazetteer:** Page 60, C-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Boat landing on island.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Durand.



Accessible only by canoe, Nine Mile Island lies within the Chippewa River and Nine Mile Slough ecosystem. Most of this 900-acre island is floodplain forest. Silver maple, green ash and swamp white oak mix with silver maple and river birch attracting Cerulean, Black-and white and Prothonotary warblers along with Red-shouldered Hawks. The northeast corner of the island is sandy with high quality oak barrens of Hill's, burr and red oaks. Here one can find Field and Lark Sparrows and Gray Catbirds. Prairie plants like the white wild indigo, stiff goldenrod and rough blazing-star grow among big and little bluestem grasses and three species of drop-seed.

**Directions:** Located just north of Durand, The main portion of the natural area is accessible by canoe. From Durand, go northeast 2.5 miles on Hwy. 85, then north 2.1 miles on Cty. M to a carry-in canoe landing. Park on the road.

## Pierce County



Pierce County is rivers; seven rivers and eight creeks, to be exact. Walleye, bass and panfish action is good on the Mississippi, while the county's Kinnickinnic and Rush Rivers are a pair of the finest trout waters in the Midwest.

The Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers form the county's western border. They meet at Prescott. From an overlook in **Mercord Mill Park** downtown, visitors can clearly see the line where the blue waters of the St. Croix join the dun-colored Mississippi. The city's **Welcome & Heritage Center** is a good place to get area travel information and see exhibits of local history (715/262-3284, [www.prescottwi.com](http://www.prescottwi.com)).

In the northwestern corner of the county, **Kinnickinnic State Park** is popular with boaters who enjoy the large, sandy delta where the Kinnickinnic meets the Mississippi River (715/425-1129, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)). In the county's northeastern corner, visit **Crystal Cave** just south of Spring Valley (800/236-2283, [www.cavern.com/crystalcave](http://www.cavern.com/crystalcave)). Open April through October, the cave descends about seventy feet and is nearly 4,000 feet long, the longest in Wisconsin.

## Freedom Park Learning Center

**Phone:** 715/262-5544

**Web site:**

<http://prescottwi.org/prescott.html>

**Signature Species:** Bald Eagles & Turkey Vultures.

**Gazetteer:** Page 58, B-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Prescott.



Located at the confluence of the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers, Freedom Park is one of the best places to bird-watch in the area. The large number of hawks, songbirds and raptors that migrate through this area in the spring and fall are impressive. This bluff-top location gives you a fantastic view of the river for many miles to the north and south. In late winter and into spring, Bald Eagles are seen here in good numbers. The eagles follow the melting ice as it recedes, and they are joined on their journey north by large numbers of Red-shouldered, Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks in migration.

(The Freedom Park Learning Center will be constructed in 2005-6. It will be a wonderful place to learn about the history, geology and nature of the region.)

**Directions:** From the Prescott bridge, take Hwy. 35 south to Monroe Street. Turn right on Monroe and travel .6 mile to the park entrance.



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## Kinnickinnic State Park & Delta State Natural Area

**Phone:** 715/425-1129

**Web site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature species:** Northern Waterthrush, Common Mergansers and Blackburnian Warblers.

**Gazetteer:** Page 58, B-2.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In River Falls, 7 miles east.

**Fee:** State Park fees apply.



Kinnickinnic State Park straddles the large sandy delta where the Kinnickinnic River meets the St. Croix River. This 1,239-acre park offers panoramic views of the river gorge as well as secluded hiking trails that traverse both prairie and upland forests holding Sedge Wrens, Bobolinks, Eastern Kingbirds, Clay-colored and Grasshopper Sparrows, Pine and Mourning Warblers, and Eastern Bluebirds. There is a large swimming area and boat-in camping at the delta. The river here stays open all winter long holding Common Mergansers, Canada Geese and Common Goldeneyes. Bald Eagles also use the area year around.

The 100-acre Kinnickinnic River Gorge and Delta State Natural Area is a deep valley of sandstone and limestone cut by glacial drift. This undisturbed river valley holds an amazing variety of birds; more than 200 species have been sighted in the park, and 120 of these use the park for nesting.

**Directions:** From River Falls, take Hwys. 29/35 south one mile, then west on Cty. FF five miles, then north on Cty. F one mile, then west on Cedar View Road one mile to the park.

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## Morgan Coulee Prairie State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/685-6222

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Eastern Bluebird, Field Sparrow and Eastern Kingbird.

**Gazetteer:** Page 59, D-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking along the road.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Bay City, 9 miles east.



This 54-acre property is a jewel; one of the last large-scale, mostly undisturbed dry prairies left in this part of the state. Morgan Coulee Prairie extends more than a half-mile along a steep, south-facing bluff in a coulee opening onto the Rush River Valley. The large prairie is broken with scattered islands of bur oak savanna dominated by open grown oaks and shallow wooded draws. Grasses found here include big and little blue-stem, side-oats and prairie drop-seed. Wildflowers, called forbes, include asters, milkweeds, bergamot and western sunflower. Shrubs include hazelnut, bettersweet, smooth sumac, and dogwoods. Darting among the flowers are Reakert's blue butterflies.

**Directions:** From Maiden Rock, go north on 385th Street 3.3 miles, then east on 200th Avenue (Morgan Road) .2 miles to the southwest corner of the site.

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## Nugget Lake County Park

**Phone:** 715/639-5611

**Web site:** [www.co.pierce.wi.us/nugget\\_lake/nl\\_main.htm](http://www.co.pierce.wi.us/nugget_lake/nl_main.htm)

**Signature Species:** Bald Eagle, American Redstart Warblers and Barred Owl.

**Gazetteer:** Page 59, C-7.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Plum city, 4.5 miles south of the park.

**Fees:** Park fees apply.



Nugget Lake County Park is a 752-acre semi-wilderness park with a 116-acre lake as its centerpiece. It is located in an area of the county known by geologists as the "Rock Elm (shale) Disturbance," a four-mile diameter semicircular meteorite impact site. The large asteroid landed in this area with the energy equivalent of 63,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs more than 400 million years ago. The impact area remained as a shallow sea for millions of years. Nuggets of gold and diamonds discovered near Nugget Lake resulted in it's name.

There is a pair of nesting Bald Eagles on the property. The woodlands hold many birds including Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Golden-winged Warblers and Wood Thrush.

**Directions:** From Plum City, go west 2.5 miles on Hwy. 10 to Cty. CC, then north 3 miles on CC to Cty. HH 1.5 miles to the park.



Kinnickinnic State Park.

## Rush River Delta State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/685-6222

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Baltimore Oriole, Yellow-throated vireo and Acadian Flycatcher.

**Gazetteer:** Page 59, D-5.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking area provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Maiden Rock just a mile southeast of the delta.



The Rush River Delta protects a floodplain forest at the mouth of the Rush River where it flows into Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River. Lowland hardwoods dominate the 325-acre property. These floodplain forest areas are very important to breeding birds like the Red-shouldered Hawk, Acadian Flycatcher, and Cerulean and Prothonotary Warblers. The delta also holds a small Great Blue Heron rookery. A sand spit extending into Lake Pepin provides nesting habitat for turtles and feeding and nesting areas for shorebirds including Forester's and Common Terns. Mallard Ducks and Wood Ducks use the areas extensively.

**Directions:** From Maiden Rock, go northwest 1.3 miles on Hwy. 35 to a parking area at the junction with Cty. A. The natural area lies south of Hwy. 35.

## Trenton Bluff Prairie State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/685-6222

**Web site:** [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us)

**Signature species:** Peregrine Falcon, hognose snake, Eastern Kingbird.

**Gazetteer:** Page 58, D-4.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking along roadside.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Hager City 1.5 miles east, and in Bay City 5 miles east.



This 110-acre site consists of two units of dry prairie situated on steep 300-foot Mississippi River sandstone bluffs capped by massive limestone cliffs. These are some of the best prairies remaining in the region. The western unit has two prairie openings with a wooded draw running between them. The eastern unit is steeper with an open cliff and oak woods. Bobolinks, Grasshopper and Clay-colored Sparrows are found here along with hognose snakes, olive hairstreak and Reakert's blue butterflies. Bald Eagles and Turkey Vultures glide by on early morning and late afternoon thermal winds and give one a great opportunity to see these birds at bluff-top levels and admire their aerial skills.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Hwy. 35 and Cty. VV north of Hager City, go west 1.5 miles on Hwy. 35 to a small pull-off in a wooded draw north of the road. For the eastern unit, travel north .4 miles on Cty. VV and park along the road. Walk due west through the woods and upslope to the prairie.

## St. Croix County



St. Croix County is, in many ways, Wisconsin's western gateway. At Hudson, I-94 links the metro-Minneapolis market with the lake country of northwestern Wisconsin. The **Wisconsin Welcome Center** in Hudson is a great place for statewide and area travel information (715/386-2571, [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)).

Hudson is both a center for recreation with boating, fishing and swimming, and a historic site with picturesque Victorian houses and parks. The center of the town's historic district is **Octagon House**, built in 1855 and now a museum (715/386-2654). The city's thriving downtown is graced by the **Phipps Center for the Arts** (715/386-2305, [www.thehipps.org](http://www.thehipps.org)).

North of Hudson, Somerset is a fun place, particularly on hot summer days. Tubing on the **Apple River** has been Somerset's bread-and-butter for decades. You'll find a half-dozen friendly tubing outfitters and campgrounds.

In northeastern St. Croix County, the **New Richmond Heritage Center** showcases local history in a complex that includes an 1884 farmhouse and eight other historic buildings (888/320-3276, [www.pressenter.com/~nrpsinc/](http://www.pressenter.com/~nrpsinc/)). In Star Prairie, you can tour the **Star Prairie Trout Farm** (715/248-3633, [www.starprairietrout.com](http://www.starprairietrout.com)). For a fee you can catch their brook and rainbow trout.

## Cylon Marsh & Cylon Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 715/684-2914

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

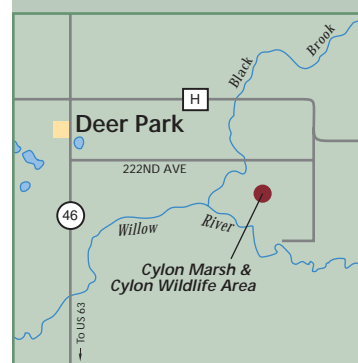
**Signature Species:** Woodcock and Ruffed Grouse.

**Gazetteer:** Page 71, C-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided in several locations.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Deer Park or New Richmond.



Cylon Marsh is a 513-acre site leased by the DNR. It is located on the northern end of Cylon Wildlife Area, a 2,345-acre property. The combination of the two provides marsh, old fields, woodlands and wetlands for a good variety of wildlife. Woodcock can be observed during their courtship flights in the spring. Ruffed Grouse, pheasants and a variety of waterfowl can also be found here. Birding along the trails will produce Song Sparrows, Eastern Kingbirds and Willow Flycatchers. Abundant wild berries grow here.

**Directions:** From Deer Park, travel south on Hwy 46 for .5 mile to 222nd Avenue. Turn left and travel 1 mile to the property.



Willow Flycatcher.



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## Eau Galle Lake Recreation Area

**Phone:** 715/778-5562

**Web site:**  
www.mvp.usace.army.mil

**Signature Species:** Bald Eagle & Osprey.

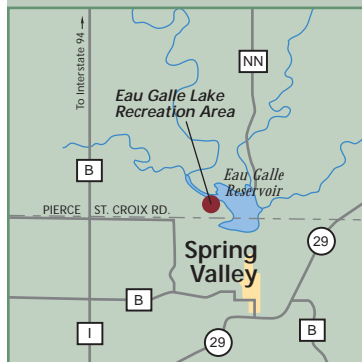
**Gazetteer:** Page 59, B-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots throughout property.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Spring Valley just south of the park.

**Fees:** User fees apply.



This 630-acre property offers a pair of day-use areas and a campground. A 150-acre lake, swimming beach, hiking trails, boat launch and good fishing make it a popular summer destination. Eau Galle Lake hosts resident Bald Eagles and Osprey. Broad-winged Hawks, American Kestrels and Great Horned Owls nest in the woods along with the Wood Thrush, Eastern Pewee, Indigo Bunting American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. On the water you might spot a Belted Kingfisher, Sora, Virginia Rail, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, and Spotted Sandpiper. Along the Ox Trail, you'll find a nice mix of warblers including Black-and-white, American Redstart, Yellow and Chestnut-sided.

**Directions:** Exit I-94 at exit 25, (Hwy. B south) for 5.25 miles to Pierce-St. Croix Road. Turn east 1.5 miles and follow signs to Main Day Use Area.

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## Oak Ridge Lake & National Waterfowl Production Area (WPA)

**Phone:** 715/684-2914

**Web site:** dnr.wi.gov

**Signature Species:** Le Conte's Sparrow, Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers.

**Gazetteer:** Page 71, C-4.

**Parking:** Parking areas provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In New Richmond, six miles southwest.



At 149 acres, Oak Ridge Lake is a major stopover lake during migration for Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. Many types of ducks, herons and egrets stay here all summer. Mallards, Green and Blue-wing Teal, and Northern Shoveler use the grasslands for nesting and rear their young on the lake. As you drive around the property, look for Short-eared Owls, Northern Harriers and Grasshopper and Clay-colored Sparrows, Dickcissels, Willow Flycatchers, Sedge Wrens, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Long-billed Marsh Wrens. WPA properties are purchased with the monies hunters spend on federal and state Duck Stamps and are managed for the production and harvest of waterfowl.

**Direction:** From New Richmond travel north 3.5 miles on Hwy. 65, then east 3 miles on 220th Avenue to Oak Ridge Lake.

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## St. Croix Islands State Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 715/684-2914

**Web site:** dnr.wi.gov

**Signature Species:** Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback Duck and Bald Eagle.

**Gazetteer:** Page 70, C-3.

**Seasonality:** Open year round.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Somerset, three miles southeast.



The Apple River and St. Croix River come together in a delta called the St. Croix Islands. These scattered oak and maple tree-covered islands range in size and are easy to access by canoe or kayak from the St. Croix River. During the spring migration nearly every type of duck, goose or swan in Wisconsin travels through this area. This important migratory route also serves many species of raptors including Bald Eagles, Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Turkey Vultures, and Northern Harriers. Wooded corridors along the Apple River hold Wood Thrush, Winter Wren, Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers, Eastern Towhees and Louisiana Waterthrush. Summer nesters include the Ruddy Duck, Green-wing teal and American Bitterns. Osprey nest here also along with Bald Eagles and Great Blue Herons.

**Directions:** To access the area, take Cty. I northwest 3 miles to 210th Avenue.

RI & LINDA MILLER



Great Blue Heron.

## Willow River State Park

**Phone:** 715/386-5931

**Web site:** [www.wipark.net](http://www.wipark.net)

**Signature species:** Henslow's Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Meadowlarks.

**Gazetteer:** Page 70, D-3.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Hudson just south of the park.

**Fee:** Park fees apply.



At 2,891 acres, Willow River State Park has varied habitats to explore. The prairies provide good looks at Grasshopper and Clay-colored Sparrows, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Bobolinks and Sedge Wrens. Along the edges of the prairies in the shrub layer, look for Gray Catbirds, House Wrens, and Indigo Buntings. Fields and woodlands hold Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, Scarlet Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. The park itself offers a campground, Little Falls Lake, a boat launch, swimming beach, nature center and gift shop.

Panoramic views of the Willow River waterfall and Willow River Gorge can be enjoyed from several trails and overlooks.

**Directions:** Exit I-94 at exit 4. Go north 3.2 miles on Hwy. 12, Cty. U and Cty. A to the park entrance.

## Willow River State Wildlife Area & Three Lakes National Waterfowl Production Area

**Phone:** 715/684-2914

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature Species:** Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Black Terns.

**Gazetteer:** Page 70, D-3.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lots provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Hudson, about 6 miles southwest.



Prairie potholes are small, shallow lakes that are somewhat rare in Wisconsin. Surrounded by open grassland, they are irresistible to marshland songbirds and waterfowl of all types. The Willow River SNA and Three Lakes are a collection of small lakes that attract Ruddy Ducks, Blue-wing, Northern Shoveler and Canada Geese in good numbers. Herons and egrets and gulls use the area along with Pied-billed Grebes. In the grasslands surrounding the potholes, you'll find Sedge Wrens, Dickcissels, Bobolinks, Western Meadowlarks, and Common Yellow-throated Warblers, as well as Grasshopper Sparrows, Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls.

**Directions:** Take Cty. A north from Willow River State Park one mile to Burkhardt Rd. east to Cty. E. Then follow E east for one mile. The lakes will be south of the road.

## Trempealeau County



Trempealeau County is the Mississippi River... and a whole lot more.

The city of Trempealeau is the county's only municipality on the river. From an observation platform on the Mississippi, you can watch the river traffic "lock-through" at Lock & Dam No. 6. Just west of town, **Perrot State Park** offers 1,270-acres of fun (608/534-6409, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)).

Choose from 98 campsites, hike 15 miles of trail, fish the Mississippi, or climb 500-foot Brady's Bluff. Just west of Perrot, the **Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge** sprawls across 5,000 acres along the river's backwaters (608/539-2311, [www.fws.gov/midwest/trempealeau](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/trempealeau)).

Just north of the river, apple orchards lovely in spring blossom surround Galesville. Along the county's western border, Arcadia is the home of the Ashley Furniture Company, whose owner financed the city's **Memorial Park**. The park's "Avenue of Heroes Walk" is an impressive 54-acre tribute to American veterans with statues and memorials to each of our nation's wars, including the 9/11 tragedy.

Whitehall, in the center of the county, is the county seat. The city boasts a central square complete with old-fashioned gazebo, a golf course, and aquatic center. Osseo, in the north-eastern corner of the county, is famous as the original home of the **Norske Nook**, famous for its mouth-watering pies.

## Great River State Trail - Trempealeau

**Phone:** 608/534-6409

**Web site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature Species:** Sandhill cranes, White-eyed vireos and Alder Flycatchers.

**Gazetteer:** Page 48, D-4.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Trailhead parking lots in Trempealeau and Onalaska.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Trempealeau and Onalaska.



Trempealeau straddles the west end of the Great River State Trail, a former railbed trail that runs 24 miles from Onalaska to Marshland. It is the final leg of a four-trail system that stretches 101 miles from central Wisconsin to the Mississippi. In Trempealeau County, the trail meanders north through Perrot State Park and on to the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. Or, you can ride it southeast to Onalaska in La Crosse County and enjoy the trek through Mississippi River bottomlands. The wilderness aspect of this trail will produce many fine birds including Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Thrashers and Bobwhite Quail.

**Directions:** Follow Hwy. 35 to the eastern edge of Trempealeau. There, on the west side of the road, you'll find a well-marked parking lot and large sign that interprets the trail.



## Perrot State Park

**Phone:** 608/534-6409

**Web site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature Species:** Scarlet Tanagers, Orchard Orioles and Bald Eagles.

**Gazetteer:** Page 49, D-5.

**Seasonality:** Open all year during daylight hours – park fees apply.

**Parking:** Parking lots throughout area.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Trempealeau.



Perrot State Park covers 1,270 acres along the Mississippi River just west of Trempealeau. It is a mixture of wooded hills, bluffs, ravines and lagoons. The park is an excellent place to visit during spring and fall bird migrations offering good looks at migrating waterfowl, songbirds and Bald Eagles. The park encompasses two state natural areas: Brady's Bluff Prairie is a 65-acre dry prairie found on the southwest facing slope of a steep bluff that rises nearly 460 feet above the river; and Trempealeau Mountain State Natural Area, a wooded rock formation that rises 425 feet from the river. It is accessible by boat or canoe.

**Directions:** From Trempealeau, go south on Main Street to South Park Road, then west to the park entrance.



Scarlet Tanager.

## Trempealeau Lakes State Wildlife Area

**Phone:** 715/284-1400

**Web site:** [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)

**Signature species:** Bald Eagles and Great Egrets.

**Gazetteer:** Page 48, D-5.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Trempealeau, 2 miles west.



The Trempealeau Lakes State Wildlife Area is only 164 acres in size, but has a mix of habitats that draw a nice variety of animals and birds. The lakes are separated from the Mississippi River by marshes and are ringed with floodplain forests of maple and river birch. Canoe or hike the area to see cuckoos, Red-shouldered Hawk and Belted Kingfishers. Great Horned and Barred Owls nest here along with Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. In the winter, springs keep part of the lakes open for birds like the Great Blue Heron who sometimes winter here. Prairie restorations hold grassland birds including Song Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats and Willow Flycatchers. The lakes are host to many species of waterfowl.

**Directions:** From Trempealeau, take Hwy. 35 one mile east toward Lock & Dam #6. Cross the railroad tracks and turn left 1 mile to the entrance.

## Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge

**Phone:** 608/539-2311

**Web site:**

<http://midwest.fws.gov/trempealeau>

**Signature Species:** Black Terns, Grasshopper Sparrow and American Bittern.

**Gazetteer:** Page 48, D-4.

**Seasonality:** Open all year during daylight hours.

**Parking:** Parking lots throughout refuge.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Centerville & Trempealeau.



Established in 1936, this 6,220-acre US Fish & Wildlife Service refuge is considered one of the best bird watching properties in the Midwest with many amenities including an interpretive center, boardwalks, observation platforms, and a well-marked auto tour. The refuge's uplands, bottomland hardwood forest and marshes produce good birds in any season.

Start your tour at the interpretive center where you can get maps and seasonal advice. White Pelicans and Tundra Swans are a big draw in May, spending several weeks on refuge marshes. Many people return in the fall to see Peregrine Falcons, Cinnamon Teal and rare Jaegers as they migrate south. The bottomland hardwood forests offer up Pileated Woodpeckers, Barred Owls and herons. The upland prairie harbors field sparrows, Bobolinks and meadowlarks. Marshland areas attract all types of water birds including rarities like American Avocets in the spring and Glossy Ibis in the fall.

**Directions:** From Trempealeau, drive north 4 miles on Hwy. 35 to Centerville where the road merges with Hwy. 54 and turns due west. Continue 2.5 miles on 35/54 to West Prairie Road, then .75 miles south to Refuge Road.



Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.

# Vernon County



Vernon County is the heart of southwestern Wisconsin's "Coulee Country," a region famous throughout the Midwest for its excellent trout fishing. Fish more than 200 miles of cold-water trout streams in a truly pastoral landscape.

Along the Mississippi River, Desoto in the southwestern corner of the county is the home of **Blackhawk Park & Recreation Area**, one of the largest campgrounds on the river with 150 campsites (608/623-2707). Further north near Genoa, you can watch as river traffic passes through **Lock & Dam No. 8**.

Inland, Westby is a community that regularly celebrates its deep Norwegian roots. Downtown, visit **Ocooch Mountain Acres**, an organic maple syrup and candy maker with a tasty product (800/253-3997, [www.ocoochmountainacres.com](http://www.ocoochmountainacres.com)). Viroqua, the county seat, offers an 18-hole golf course, a \$3 million indoor pool and aquatics center, and a downtown mix of specialty shops and anchor businesses.

The Kickapoo River snakes through eastern Vernon County. It's a favorite with canoeists. You'll find several outfitters in Ontario. **Wildcat Mountain State Park** offers thirty campsites and a terrific overlook of the river valley (608/337-4775, [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)). The **Kickapoo Valley Reserve** is an 8,569-acre recreation area with camping, canoeing, horseback riding trails, and a brand-new visitor's center ready to help you (608/625-2960, <http://kvr.state.wi.us>).

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## Genoa National Fish Hatchery

**Phone:** 608/689-2605

**Web site:**

[www.fws.gov/midwest/genoa/](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/genoa/)

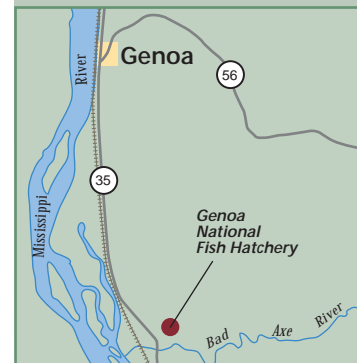
**Signature Species:** Dowitchers, plovers, herons and egrets.

**Gazetter:** Page 40, D-1.

**Seasonality:** Open year round.

**Parking:** Parking lot.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Genoa, 4 miles north on Hwy 35.



The Genoa National Fish Hatchery rears 23 species of fish including trout, northern pike, and walleye. Guided and self-guided tours are offered. The area has 17 open-air ponds and 6 raceways. Because of its location at the confluence of the Bad Axe and Mississippi Rivers, the La Crosse Chapter of the Audubon Society ranks the hatchery as a top location for bird watching. On a walk among the rearing ponds, backwaters and sloughs you might see Great Egrets, Solitary Sandpipers, Green Herons, resident Bald Eagles, and Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

**Directions:** Located along Hwy. 35, four miles south of Genoa.



Solitary Sandpiper.

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## Duck Egg County Forest

**Phone:** 608/637-5485

**Web site:**

<http://lwcd.org/parks.htm>

**Signature Species:** Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagles and Eastern Bluebirds.

**Gazetteer:** Page 40, D-3.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot provided.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Viroqua, 10 miles southeast.



At 707 acres, Duck Egg County Forest is managed for timber. But it's also a flood control project on the North Fork of the Bad Axe River. The Duck Egg Flood Control Dam is large; its spillways and pools attract waterfowl and herons. Hiking trails take you up steep valleys to a hilltop overlook of the spillways. The wooded hillsides are filled with warblers in the spring and fall and the wooded countryside provides a colorful display in the fall.

**Directions:** From Hwy. 27 in Viroqua, travel north 3 miles to Cty. Y. Take Y west (left) for 7.5 miles to Irish Ridge Road and follow to marked entrance.



Cooper's Hawk.

RI & LINDA MILLER



Fly fishing, Vernon County.



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## Kickapoo Valley Reserve

**Phone:** 608/625-2960

**Web site:** <http://kvr.state.wi.us>

**Signature Species:** Acadian Flycatcher, Cerulean and Kentucky Warblers.

**Gazetter:** Page 41, D-5.

**Seasonality:** Reserve open year-round; the Visitor Center is open daily MD-Oct, 8am- 4:30pm; closed Sun Oct-MD.

**Parking:** Parking at visitor center and day-use lots.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In La Farge 1.5 miles south, or Ontario 4 miles north.



Located in the heart of the Driftless Area, the 8,600-acre reserve is a recreation area owned by the State of Wisconsin and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The reserve's habitat includes the secluded valley of the Kickapoo River, its forested hillsides and sandstone cliffs. Broad-winged Hawks, Winter Wrens and Black-throated Green Warblers can be found here. The property's northern border abuts Wildcat Mountain State Park. Stop at the reserve's brand-new visitor center for maps and interpretive displays.

**Note:** The reserve offers overnight camping in several designated areas. A relaxing float down the Kickapoo River is very popular; several businesses in Ontario rent canoes and provide shuttle services. Trout fishing on the area's many streams is very good.

**Directions:** The Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center is located one mile north of La Farge at S3661 State Highway 131.

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## Old Settler's Park & Genoa Power Plant

**Phone:** 608/689-2335

**Web site:** <http://www.dairynet.com/>

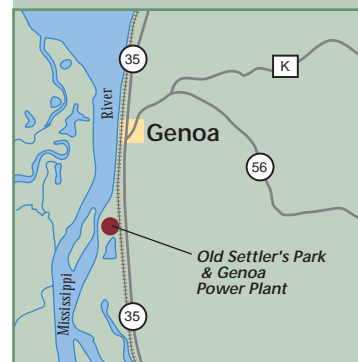
**Signature Species:** Ospreys and Peregrine Falcons

**Gazetter:** Page 40, D-1.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking lot and picnic area.

**Nearest food & lodging:** In Genoa.



Old Settler's Park is a wonderful place to stop and view the Mississippi River, look for birds, or enjoy a leisurely picnic. From the park you can see Turkey Vultures and Red-tailed Hawks, Double-crested Cormorants, eagles, Osprey and Peregrine Falcons glide along the bluffs to the east. The Genoa Power Plant, just south of Genoa, has hosted nesting Peregrine Falcons since 1998 when a nest box was installed on the southwest stack. You can park at a boat landing south of the plant. Look for adults in March through April, and through July if they've brought off a brood of young.

**Directions:** Old Settlers Park is located along Hwy. 35, two miles south of Genoa. The Genoa Power Plant is found on the southern edge of Genoa.

MIKE MCDOWELL



Red-tailed Hawk.

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## Wildcat Mountain State Park & Mt. Pisgah Hemlock-Hardwoods State Natural Area

**Phone:** 608/337-4775 or 608/785-9000

**Web Site:** [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)

**Signature Species:** Eastern Wood Pewee & Great Crested Flycatcher.

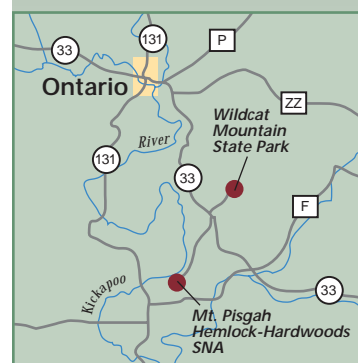
**Gazetter:** Page 41, C-6.

**Seasonality:** Open all year.

**Parking:** Parking Lot at picnic area.

**Fee:** Park admission fees apply. Camping fees are additional.

**Nearest Food & Lodging:** In Ontario, 3 miles north on Hwy 33.



This 3,600-acre park offers a variety of habitat. Oak, maple, birch, and poplar dominate the forested valleys. Birds on the property include Chestnut-sided Warbler, Ovenbird and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Within the park, Mt. Pisgah Hemlock-Hardwoods is accessed via the Hemlock Trail south to the site. The Kickapoo River meanders here among steep bluffs with relict stands of hemlock and yellow birch, with scattered white pine. The sandstone cliffs support rare plants and many interesting and hard to find species of birds such as Louisiana Waterthrush, Cerulean and Kentucky Warblers, and Acadian Flycatcher. The views of the Kickapoo Valley from the park's observation overlooks are quite dramatic.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Hwys. 131 and 33 in Ontario, go east and south on Hwy 33 about 2.5 miles, then southwest on Park Road.



Kickapoo Valley Reserve in winter.

## More Sources of Tourism Information

### County Contacts

These contacts, in each of the thirteen counties in the Mississippi/Chippewa Rivers region, are ready to help you plan your outdoor adventure. They can suggest accommodations and restaurants, as well as attractions and other historical, cultural and environmental opportunities.

Buffalo County Clerk's Office  
608/685-6209  
[www.buffalocounty.com](http://www.buffalocounty.com)

Chippewa Valley CVB  
715/831-2345, 888/523-3866  
[www.chippewavalley.net](http://www.chippewavalley.net)

Prairie du Chien Chamber of Commerce  
608/326-8555, 800/732-1673  
[www.prairieduchien.org](http://www.prairieduchien.org)

Grant County UWEX Office  
608/723-2125  
[www.grantcounty.org/visitor](http://www.grantcounty.org/visitor)

Black River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
715/284-4658, 800/404-4008  
[www.blackrivercountry.com](http://www.blackrivercountry.com)

La Crosse Area CVB  
608/782-2366, 800/658-9424  
[www.explorelacrosse.com](http://www.explorelacrosse.com)

Pepin County Visitor Information  
715/672-5709, 888/672-5709  
[www.pepinwisconsin.com](http://www.pepinwisconsin.com)

Pierce County Partners in Tourism, Inc.  
715/273-5864, 800/474-3723  
[www.travel Piercecounty.com](http://www.travel Piercecounty.com)

Hudson Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau  
715/386-8411, 800/657-6775  
[www.hudsonwi.org](http://www.hudsonwi.org)

Trempealeau County Tourism Council  
608/534-6615, 800/927-5339  
[www.trempealeaucountytourism.com](http://www.trempealeaucountytourism.com)

Vernon County Tourism Council  
608/637-2575  
[www.visitvernoncounty.com](http://www.visitvernoncounty.com)

### Wisconsin Welcome Centers

Three Wisconsin Welcome Centers are located along the Mississippi River. Operated by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, they can help you plan a local birding foray, or a two-week statewide vacation. You'll find Welcome Centers in:

Prairie du Chien  
(at the Hwy. 18 bridge)  
608/326-2241, 800/432-8747  
[www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)

La Crosse  
(at the I-90 rest area, eastbound only)  
608/783-6403, 800/432-8747  
[www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)

Hudson  
(Off I-94, exit 2)  
715/386-2571, 800/432-8747  
[www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)

### More Birding Resources

National Audubon Society  
800/542-2748  
[www.audubon.org/states/wi](http://www.audubon.org/states/wi)

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge  
608/539-2311  
<http://midwest.fws.gov/trempealeau>

US Fish & Wildlife Service  
Upper Mississippi National Fish & Wildlife Refuge  
[www.fws.gov/midwest/uppermississippi/river](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/uppermississippi/river)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
608/266-2621  
[www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov)

## Wisconsin Welcome Centers

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism operates ten Wisconsin Welcome Centers (WWC) at major highway entrances to the state. They're great places to stop for maps, travel information, trip planning, brochures and publications, vacation ideas, or just a friendly smile and directions to the nearest restaurant.

Centers distribute free publications that detail Wisconsin accommodations, attractions, events, golfing, camping, biking, birding, state parks, and historic attractions. You can also order these free publications on-line at **[www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)**, or call toll-free **800/432-8747**.





## Top Ten Things Birders might want to bring on their next Wisconsin foray

**10. Your clubs** – Wisconsin has more than 400 golf courses available for public play. Can you say “Tee time?”

**9. Your Creel** – To put the trout in you’re gonna catch on any of Wisconsin’s 2,444 cold water streams.

**8. Your Camping Gear** – You’ll need it at any of the 5,535 campsites in Wisconsin’s 60 state parks and forests.

**7. Your Swimming Suit** – There’s a million acres of water in Wisconsin. If that’s not enough, you may stay at a hotel with a pool. And if you’ve brought the kids/grandkids... can you say “Waterpark?”

**6. Your canoe** – The better to be silent on any of Wisconsin’s 15,000 lakes.

**5. Your Bike** – More than 1,000 miles of surfaced bike trails throughout Wisconsin.

**4. Your Antiquing Guide** – Whoa, better bring the credit card too.

**3. Your Camera** – It’s gonna be gorgeous out there.

**2. Your Appetite** – For a cuppa Joe, a slice of pie and a little ala mode at a home-cookin’ café.

**1. Your Gazetteer and Compass** – Two things John Muir never forgot.

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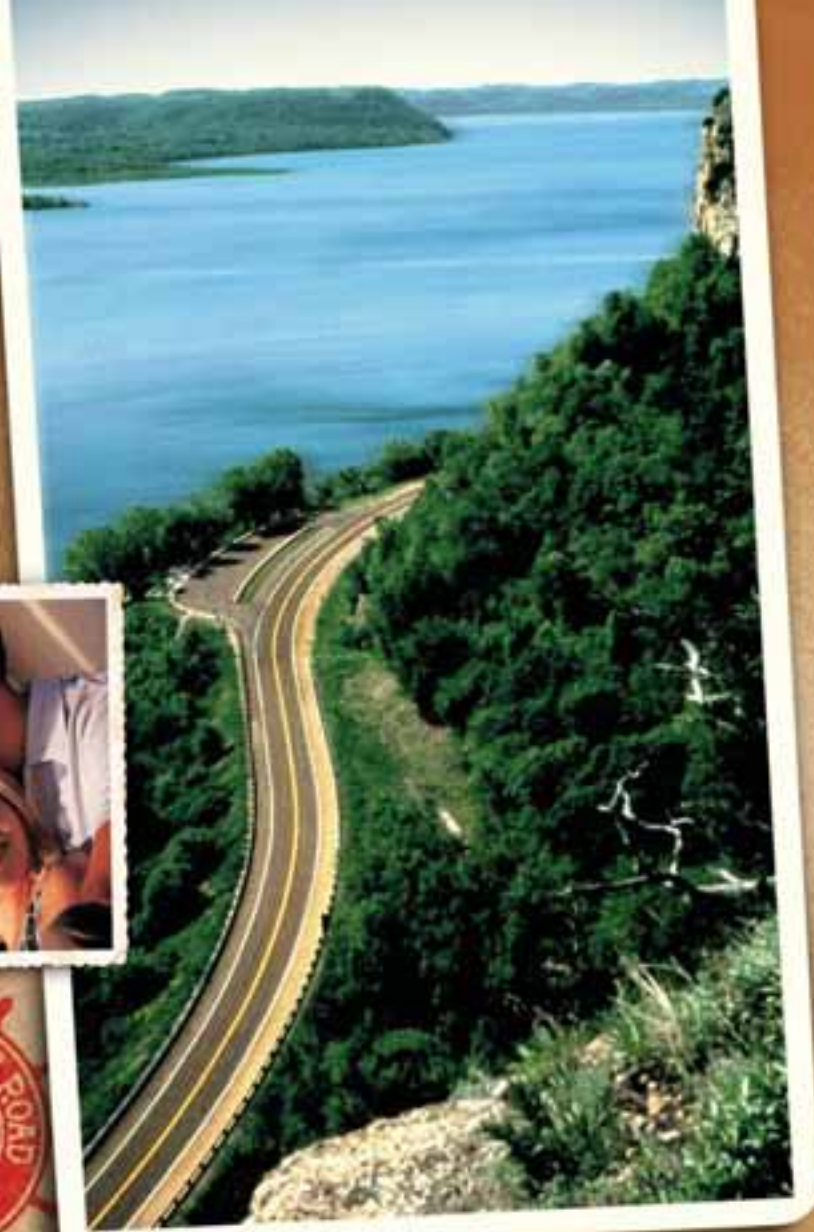
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"Great Egret" © Richard Armstrong



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